





12674 h. 12.

ELLEN,
COUNTESS OF
CASTLE HOWEL,

A NOVEL.
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By MRS. BENNETT.

“Others make men, I only report them.” MONTAIGNE.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva-Press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

M DCC XCIV.

ELLEN

OF

CASTLE HOWELL

A NOVEL

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY MISS J. W. HOWELL



FOR THE
LIBRARY OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM

1850

E L L E N,
COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWEL.

CHAP. I.

ELLEN having reconciled her mind to the marriage of Evelyn, and he being now removed, with his destined wife, to a distance, entire tranquillity took possession of her bosom. Lady Margaret, who we have not mentioned a long while, being returned from a visit she had been paying Mrs. Morley, wrote, that the house in Grosvenor-Street was ready for their reception, they had informed Lady Gertrude they should return to

VOL. IV.

B

London,

London, for one month, before they retired entirely to Castle Howel, which the Countess wished to be at Christmas, preparations were making for their departure, and as the old Lady, having lost her sister and Evelyn, could not exist without her nursery, she accepted the invitation to accompany them.

Winifred, to her great joy, was ordered to pack up, and the day fixed for their departure.

Lord Castle Howel having rode out early, to join the hunt, Ellen devoted the morning to letter writing, and was sealing the last, when she was disturbed by the shrieks of the female servants, she rang her bell violently, as, seized with a presentiment for which she could not account, she was unable to stir.

Winifred entered with her eyes wilder and her cheeks paler than ever, she could only articulate "my Lord." Ellen flew down stairs, and the first object that struck her sight was
Philip,

Philip, covered with blood and dust; the honest fellow ran out of the house the moment he saw her, she followed, and met, on the steps the servants carrying the disfigured body of her still bleeding Lord.

Her sensations were not to be described; an ashy paleness took possession of her vivid countenance, but the recollection of duty and affection gave her fortitude; she followed the body 'till it was laid on a bed, without speaking, and then, Gordon being come, watched the examination of his hurt in silent terror.

A favorite horse, on which he rode, had taken fright on the top of a hill, and having left the reins negligently on his neck while he was speaking to Dean Holt, who was of his party, the beast ran furiously down the hill, and threw the Earl headlong on a rough brake of stones, his foot was yet entangled in the stirrup, and the animal grown more vicious by the stoppage, was plunging and kicking when the Edinburgh stage passed; two outside pas-

sengers jumped down, one of these was the faithful Philip, who, having been with his master on a tour to the Highlands, had not received the Earl's letter in time to attend him before, and who was now going to Natly Abbey.

Philip knew the horse the moment he got near, and having seized the bridle, wanted resolution to look at the unfortunate rider; a large posse of horsemen soon came up, and Philip was just in time to receive the last breath of the best of masters.

Expresses were sent to all the surgeons in the vicinity from the spot where the fatal accident happened, but as he died in the instant they removed him, it was in vain to wait their arrival; Gordon, however, with the ardent hope inspired by grateful friendship, examined the body, but finding many wounds of a description that would each have been instant death, he gave up the hopeless melancholy task, and stood

stood with his arms folded, and tears trickling down his cheeks.

“What! is he gone, Sir? quite, quite gone? and shall I never see him more? never hear him speak? can this be, Mr. Gordon? The calm but ghastly look which accompanied these questions, roused Gordon, who did not before perceive Ellen was present.

“My God, Madam,” said he, “why do you witness a scene like this?” and he attempted to lead her away, she resisted, but nature, exhausted by the force which her anxiety to attend her husband put on her spirits, gave way, and she was carried to her apartment apparently as lifeless as himself.

Lady Gertrude retired to the nursery, and there, in the moment of her nephew's dissolution it was, she only could find comfort; this Lady's attachment to the Earl, as the head of the Castle Howel family, was as strong as such attachments generally are; had his

Lordship died in London, or any other place but Natly, she would have put on mourning; but excepting in the circumstance of his dying without an heir, it would have passed in the mass of natural events, without being commemorated by a tear of regret; death so near home, was, however a terrific thing, 'in the natural way it would have been more so—for if the insatiable glutton had swallowed Earl Castle Howel, what might not she, who was so much older, expect; she, however, was as much affected as it was in her nature to be, and directed every kind of attention to be paid the Countess; but the important nursery business engrossed her personal attendance, excepting only a few minutes she occasionally spared for the delirious widow.

Gordon sat unwearied, watching every turn in her disorder on one side of her bed, and Winifred on the other, the latter entirely cured for the present of her loquacity, and fear of ghosts,

God

God has, in his wisdom and mercy to his creatures, implanted in our natures that kind of resignation to his will, that the separations he ordains seldom operate fatally; whereas madness, suicide, and desperation, are frequently the consequences of separations which are the result of mortal wisdom. Ellen's fever abated, her senses returned, and the sight of her child, who Mr. Gordon insisted should be brought to her, though Lady Gertrude trembled with apprehension lest he should get the fever, helped to recall her affections to a world where she had yet much to lose — and a multitude of letters, which came both by post and express, lay unopened 'till she should be permitted to peruse them. In the mean while Lady Gertrude also received letters, by no means agreeable, which induced her to send express to London for her man of business.

This was a process commenced at law against the two spinsters, and Ellen, Countess Dowager of Castle howel, for a combination

to pass a surreptitious heir on the world, as a son of the late Earl, to the injury and exclusion of Walter Howel, of Moor Bank, Esq. in consequence of which the whole of the Castle Howel estates were, by order of the Chancellor, put into receivers hands 'till the matter was decided. Other letters informed Lady Gertrude, from her niece, Lady Margaret Howel, that she having some time since given her hand to Doctor Macsheat, a Physician of great eminence, had removed from Grosvenor-Street; she particularized, with great minuteness, the locks she had sealed, and in whose presence, and hinted, how sorry she was, for the Countess's sake, to find her brother's affairs were greatly involved. "I believe, niece," muttered Lady Gertrude, "*you* can best explain *who* has involved them."

As soon as Ellen was able to sit up, her letters were laid before her — one with the family arms claimed the preference; it was an exact copy of that Lady Gertrude received
from

from the now Lady Margaret Macsheat, with the bare alterations of name and title; the rest contained a cloud of demands from all sorts of tradesmen, by which it appeared, that Lord Castle Howel, who for the sole purpose of paying his father's debts, an act of filial piety to which he was not bound, had, the first year of succeeding to the estate, been his own steward, in order to settle the annual expence, had, since that year, never paid a single tradesman, except indeed a few partial payments to some of the necessitous, whose circumstances had rendered very pressing.

It was not 'till urged and reurged by Mr. Gordon and Lady Gertrude, Ellen would give a thought to her worldly affairs; one circumstance however did more towards it than all their rhetoric.

The body of the Earl was embalmed: It was intended, by the Countess's directions, to be removed in great state to Westminster-Abbey, where there was a family vault; Lady

B 5

Gertrude

Gertrude had the delicacy to forbear hinting at the expence, though from the increasing demands on her nephew's effects, she knew there would be no assets; the night before it was to be sent off, her Ladyship received certain intelligence that an arrest was actually to be sent to meet the corps, and that if it was not on the road, that arrest would come to Natly Abbey; Lady Gertrude's pride, as well as humanity, was shocked, she sent for Gordon, who undertook to break and explain the matter to the Countess.

To law and all its blessings as well as curses Ellen was yet happily a stranger: She could form no conception how Lord Castle Howel, who, if ever there lived a just man was surely one, could have run in debt; nor what rhetoric could justify a violation of the dead, but the idea that violation should be offered the sacred remains of the best of men, threw her into hysterics, she was prevailed on to consent to its private interment in the vault

vault belonging to Natly Abbey, and not six hours after, the arrest actually arrived.

This shock over, she had yet another to sustain, in the account of the chancery suit, began by the Howels of Moor Bank, against her son's right: The expence and tedious progress of the law, where so much was at stake, must, in the present circumstances, rest on the two great aunts of the young heir; no doubt could be entertained of their attachment to a cause so near their hearts, and yet Mr. Gordon took the liberty of suggesting, it would be as well if his mother had something in her own power to contribute in defence of her only son.

This was a plea indeed! it opened every wound in her widowed heart, it drew forth all the mother's fondness, all her sense of right, her fear of wrong — she pressed the smiling infant to her heart, called on her dear Lord to protect his injured boy, bathed his face with tears, and gave herself up to a sorrow more

poignant than she had yet felt : On the first agonizing surprise, she wept for the loss of her husband, her protector, her friend ; the guardian of her youth, the mentor of her maturer years ; the alleviator of pain, and the companion who tempered excess of pleasure with the precepts of wisdom—the rock of her confidence was gone, and she felt herself equally unable to support his loss, or be her own directress. When she was informed he died insolvent, that she was a Countess without dower, or fortune, there was nothing terrible in that ; no deprivation that wounded her ; Code Gwyn was open to her and hers, there she knew she would be a welcome guest, and there she resolved to go ; Lady Gertrude might, perhaps, offer an asylum at Natly Abbey, but there she resolved not to stay.

Lord Castle Howel then was lamented for himself ; little did the fond mother foresee, that she whose heart had never known guile, in the smallest instance, would be accused of fraud ; or that the innocent child, on whom

his

his noble father doated, would be cheated of his birth-right.

No worldly wisdom had yet found its way into the heart of Ellen; the difficulties into which her ignorance of, and inattention to, that single point, had involved her, were recent proofs, how little qualified she was to take an active part, in a world, where ignorance may be a misfortune, but where innocence is a cardinal sin.

But what is the lesson, the science, the practice, maternal love will not learn? what will it not brave? where will it not insinuate? what does it fear? and what will it not suffer? "It would be as well if the mother had something in *her* power, to contribute to the defence of her son," repeated Gordon, as the violence of her grief subsided into a settled melancholy.

"Ah, Mr. Gordon," said Ellen mournfully, "what have I but tears and prayers?"

"And

"And those, be assured, dear Lady, will avail much; but our reliance on God must not render us careless to the means he puts in our own power, you must not desert yourself."

"Ah! Sir."

"Nor must you abandon your child."

"Oh, never, never."

"You do abandon him in the most cruel sense in not asserting your own right."

"My sweet boy," and again she folded him to her heart, "but what can I do?"

Gordon said, he was sure she was wronged. "Ask yourself, could so good, so fond a husband, live in peace, and know the wife he adored would be totally destitute at his death? You, I know, think little of this. The old women of this abbey have whims, but no souls, when

when they come to see you dependent on them, even for bread, they will shew an old friend with a new face; their money must fly for the child, and if they abandon ——”

“God will protect my Arthur,” said the distracted mother.

“God forbid I should doubt that, but,” continued Gordon, “you also must protect him, you must look spiritedly into your affairs, you must detect imposition, and punish fraud, you must be bold in righteousness, you will then cement your friends, and confound your enemies; if you are wanting in your own cause, those will desert you, and these conquer.”

Gordon's colour rose as he spoke, the honest warmth of his heart pervaded his whole frame; he took the child in his arms, and bending one knee to the ground, held it up, and, in an agitated voice, called on the honored shade of its deceased father to witness,
he

he devoted his life and his faculties to the support, protection, and comfort of the widowed Countess and her infant child.

Ellen caught the enthusiastic ardour of her friend; she threw herself on her knees, one hand upraised, the other extended to the child, her fine eyes turned with little visible but the white, a hectic colour animating her pale cheek; she ejaculated, but her ardor subdued her power, she spoke inwardly and fainted away.

Winifred was always near; and Gordon had the pleasure to see her soon recover. "Presently, Sir, presently I will see you," and she pointed to the door. The child was laying on the sofa. "Take him, Sir, take your charge with you."

Gordon obeyed and left her.

Winifred was also dismissed, and the Countess knelt before the only being who could assist

assist her. Sad hearts, they say, make warm devotees; and with as great truth they also say, the essence of cheerfulness is in the true spirit of religion.

Mr. Gordon was again summoned, and found her, from whatever cause, calm and resigned.

She felt, she said, all his kindness, and resorted to his argument about her Lord; she knew he thought she would be in affluence, all his personals were settled on her.

Gordon said, Lady Gertrude's man of business was to meet an eminent counsel at Natly Abbey, on the morrow, he advised examining what papers the Earl had left there before them. Ellen wished not to be present, but Gordon again reminded her of the absolute necessity of her affairs; still she wished to be spared that one trial: Gordon, without answering, proceeded with the letters. One from Miss Holt, most sympathizing and affectionate,

fectionate, she put into her bosom: There was one with a ducal coronet. "Duke Dash had the honor to offer compliments of condolence to the Countess Dowager of Castle Howel, begged to have leave to pay early devours to her in behalf of his son, late Lord Charles Dash, now Marquis of Squandervelt."

Gordon looked earnestly in Ellen's face, all was cold contempt and indifference. "I advise," said he, "all such letters as are not incumbent on yourself to answer, may be put together, for Lady Gertrude's gentleman to do it in the proper way."

"Surely, Sir, that letter does not require an answer?" and she was on the point of committing it to the flames.

"I don't know that," answered Gordon, eagerly rescuing the polite scroll, "our young heir's title may come before the Lords, and however insignificant he may be else where, every Peer tells for one in their own house.

- Another

Another coronet; ah! my old friend, are you here?" He read,

Lord Claverton never regretted his confinement and ill health so much as at that moment, as it deprived him of the honor of personally assuring the Countess Dowager of Castle Howel, how much he was devoted to her service: He could not express his indignation, to find there existed beings, capable of wronging the innocent child of a noble father; nor his grief, that such beings were leagued against the peace and honor of the most charming of women; he offered nothing to *her*, but he entreated she would permit him to be one of Lord Castle Howel's first friends, and that *his* attorney might be allowed to commune with, and go hand in hand in every step towards establishing his undoubted right. "Bravo," cried Gordon, "this is a friend in need," and away he capered with the letter to Lady Gertrude.

Ellen

Ellen could not but be pleased, and while Gordon was absent she went on opening the letters; a card, in a french envelope, from Mrs. Morley, was put aside, for Lady Gertrude's gentleman.

From Lady Daub, ditto.

And so on.

Not so the welcome packet from Code Gwyn, yet it was not such an one as she expected, it wanted not sympathy, tenderness, or condolence, the letters were not short, but something they certainly did want that went to Ellen's heart.

"Lord help us," said Gordon, re-entering, "if this old friend of mine comes to Natly, he will rival Evelyn; the old dame is already half in love with him."

Gordon looked earnestly in Ellen's face as he said this, no blush arose, no symptom of latent passion;

passion, all was settled, pale, widowed grief; the miniature of Lord Castle Howel hung from her neck, she was then holding it in her hand, her eyes fixed, and the tears distilling from them drop by drop on the picture.

Gordon felt a pang of self-reproach, and retired in inward confusion.

Lady Gertrude's man of business kept his appointment, and presently after him arrived a gay chaise and four, out of which skipped a spruce, well dressed, well booted, and well powdered person, who desired the porter would announce Serjeant Pennings.

The Serjeant was shewn in, bowed to Lady Gertrude, was overjoyed to see his very good friend Mr. Procefs, warmed his hands, pulled up his boots, and asked Lady Gertrude to allow him the honor of setting his watch by her Ladyship's.

“Sat up with my Lord Judge last night, dry business at the assize—good deal to do in Criminal Court—nothing at all at Nisi Prius—Serjeant Clagget made a good thing of a notorious sheep-stealer, brought him off through thick and thin.”

Mr. Procefs sat very impatiently waiting the end of an harangue, Mr. Serjeant Penning intended should be introductory, and was just in the second hem, preparatory to an harangue, for the same purpose, when a servant threw open the door, and Mr. Gordon led in the widowed Countess.

The beauty and grace of our heroine might have appeared more dazzling, but never so captivating as at this moment. The gentlemen of the law forgot their courts; but what is that, they forgot themselves. We are aware our readers will be incredulous, but the fact may be proved. Two gentlemen, eminent in the law, forgot their own importance one whole minute, while they were gazing
on

on a beautiful woman ! but this was too rare a thing to last : They were hardly seated before Mr. Procefs made *his* introductory harangue.

Mr. Procefs was neither young nor handsome, but as he chose to think himself so, it was the same thing to him : He was, as he was pleased to insinuate, a great favorite with the ladies, and might marry to great advantage if he pleased, but he did not please ; his family was like no other body's family in this world, for they were faultless ; his house was a pattern for all other houses, it was all his own taste ; his chariot was the finest of all possible chariots, it was made by the first man, from the first model of the age ; his business was in the first line, and conducted in the first style, for he did every thing himself.

Mr. Serjeant Pennings took occasion to look very arch at some of Mr. Procefs's periods ; and Mr. Procefs was careful he should only look ; for, though the Serjeant was quite
ready

ready to pop in a short sentence, every time Mr. Procefs breathed, the latter recovered his wind with fuch rapidity, the thing was impossible.

"I thought, Madam, these gentlemen were come to talk of law," said Ellen, with dignity.

Mr. Procefs recollected himself, and the Serjeant took out his papers; Ellen drew nearer the table, and Gordon stirred the fire.

"Hem! the ladies wish, Mr. Serjeant, to have your opinion, on the case I sent you, by the York mail."

"I want principally to know, how long it may be kept in the Courts before it is finally determined; for, as to the event, of that. I am certain," said Lady Gertrude.

"May be so, Madam, I wish it may with all my heart, but nothing certain."

"How,

"How, Sir," said Ellen, "not certain! when the birth of the child is so easily proved, the hour, the minute he was born."

"Nothing to the point: Remember a cause where a midwife sued an unmarried lady for the expences of lying-in; defendant denied; sued plaintiff for *Scan. Mag.* and jury gave verdict against midwife a thousand pounds damages for injuring defendant's character--in that case, we had nurse, maids, and gossips, to prove, yet lost the cause. Remember another case, where we claimed as heir, and could not prove, by a single witness, where, when, how, or, indeed, whither we were ever born at all, and there we got our cause."

"Good God!" exclaimed Ellen, "how oft' have I heard my dear Lord expatiate on the wisdom, the policy, and the equity of English Laws."

"So they are, Madam," returned the ready Serjeant, "so they are; very wise, vastly politic, and strictly just."

"Bless me, Sir," answered Ellen, "were you not just saying?—"

"Nothing about the laws, dear Madam," rejoined the Serjeant, "I was only speaking of the practice of the Courts."

Mr. Procefs laughed out, "Very, very good."

"This may be very amusing to you, gentlemen," said Lady Gertrude, "but we are engaged in a serious business."

"Why, then, Ladies, seriously," replied the Serjeant, "on your answers being put in, which Mr. Procefs and I will take care shall be in proper time, a Writ of Enquiry will probably be issued, we evade that, and —"

"Why so, Sir," interrupted Ellen, "Why should we evade inquiry?"

"Give

“Give me leave, Madam, give me leave.”
— Mr. Procefs, arofe, and whispering the Countefs, begged ſhe would not interrupt the Serjeant, who was one of the firſt men; *he* always employed him.

Ellen and Lady Gertrude looked at each other, they ſighed reſponſively.

The Serjeant went on. “And get a trial in Court of King’s Bench, ‘To prove competency of witneſſes,’ then we go back to Equity, ‘ten to one they ſend us back again to Court of King’s Bench; at laſt get a decree or loſe decree, no matter which, juſt talking for argument ſake — then we go to the houſe of Peers; ten to one again but they ſend us back to one of the Courts below.”

Gordon groaned, and inſinuating his hand under his wig, ſcratched his head.

“I ſee,” ſaid Lady Gertrude, “we ſhall never underſtand theſe gentlemen, be ſo good

as only to tell us, how long this matter may be deciding."

Mr. Serjeant rang for his servant, and, standing up, assured her Ladyship he had a strong sense of the high honor conferred on him, by her commands, and should be always proud and happy to obey her; but as to the time it would take, to determine a chancery suit, where 20,000 a year was at stake, no man in existence knew: begged she would be *perfectly easy* in his attention to the business, and was the ladies most devoted and obedient humble servant.

Mr. Proceß, when out of his egotism, was a conversable man; he explained the measures taken and to be taken, but the glorious uncertainty of the law left the dispute as much in the womb of time with him, as with the Serjeant; he however warmly recommended it to the Countess to go to London, confessed he thought there was some treachery in the business of the late Earl, and offered his assistance

sistance to find it out. Ellen thanked him, and both ladies, ill and out of spirits, retired to their several chambers, leaving Process, who was to set off early, to supper and be entertained by the Doctor.

When Mr. Gordon attended Ellen next day, she reminded him he had not thought of the papers, while the lawyers were there.

It did not much matter, he said, he would not trust either of them with a broken gallipot; he had a friend somewhere in London, who did not indeed ride circuits, but he should make bold to recommend her affairs to him, except, indeed, Lord Claverton's attorney.

Ellen cared not who, if he did her son justice."

Mr. Gordon then, in the presence of Lady Gertrude, and the curate, who officiated for parson Runnington, opened the Earl's cabi-

net, but there was not a single voucher, nor even his banker's account; on a few letters were written, descriptions of different plants he had happened to see, and some figures, but no other papers: A patent key, belonging as Ellen thought, to his writing table in town, was carefully tied to a ribbon, in a drawer with some rings and other jewels, but nothing was found of importance to the grand inquiry.

Mr. Gordon still urging the Countess to go to London, and Lady Margaret's letters hinting something should be done about the house, where she, at her own expence, had put the servants into mourning, she at last agreed to fix the time: But now a difficulty occurred not easily got over—Ellen could not leave her child, Lady Gertrude could not let him go.

To the fondness of the mother was opposed the welfare of the child; it was born at Natly, that therefore was its native air; he
had

had never a day's illness; his nurse, a wholesome country woman, who had not had the small pox, would not go to London, the milk therefore must be changed, and the child's life endangered.

Ellen would then stay with her child, but Gordon so effectually pleaded the service she might be of to herself and him, she at length consented to leave her darling in Lady Gertrude's care, and proceed to London.

On the evening previous to their departure, the Countess told Mr. Gordon, the letters she received from Code Gwyn were so unsatisfactory, and her desire to see her aged grandfather so great, she was resolved to pay them a short visit, before she went to London, "And oh!" said she passionately, "that I could carry my boy with me and leave him there."

Mr. Gordon thought she was wrong; he reminded her of the near approach of Term,

and as to the child, confessed, in his opinion, he could be no where so well as at Natly, where its infant attractions were cementing the love of those only on whom it was to depend.

“ Well,” Ellen said, “ whatever happened to her she would not be put off seeing her dear grandfather ; if he died without giving her his blessing she should never forgive herself, or those who prevented her ; so if Gordon would escort her, well ; if not she would go by herself, and as soon as the duty her heart yearned to pay at Code Gwyn was over, she would go to London and do all he wished.

Gordon with much murmuring, acceded, and Philip being reinstated into his Lady’s service, was directed to take proper measures for the Welch journey ; but, as Gordon justly observed, it could answer no end to acquaint Lady Gertrude with their route, as the shortstay intended at Code Gwyn would only retard their arrival in London
three

three or four days, and the law suit before her had already began so to operate on her Ladyship's feelings, in respect to money matters, that the smallest expence appeared enormous, and the servants-hall already echoed with murmurs on account of a change in their diet.

To save a carriage Winifred rode in the chaise with her Lady and Gordon, Philip was the single out rider, and thus Ellen, who had left her native home a blooming bride, with a shew of equipage and attendance, that attracted all eyes as she passed, was now returning a dowerless widow, unattended, and overwhelmed with distress, within the short space of eighteen months.

They left Natly Abbey so early that Ellen bathed the face of her sleeping boy, with fond reluctant tears, without his awaking; and Lady Gertrude, whose fretfulness increased with her resolution to sell her last acre, to exclude the man she hated from the Castle

Howel estate, having gone to bed indisposed was not disturbed.

Often did the weeping mother form a resolution to depart, and as often return for one look more; and, "Oh," cried she, leaning on Gordon, "if this anguish should be a presentiment, like that I felt on the fatal morning when I lost my Lord; ah! why do I leave my child? What is the world to me without him? What are titles and estates, have I not already, at my early period of life, found their inefficacy? Would," added she, lowering her voice, "would the gates of this mansion open to receive the widow and the fatherless without some interest of their own? Oh! no, Why should I not, then, carry my infant to that home, where poverty and distress, with no other claim than sorrow, are received with open arms?"

Gordon's heart also failed, he could not answer.

"Will

"Will not *my* aunts, dear good-hearted creatures, will not they be as careful of my child, as my Lord can be of his?"

Winifred did not dare to speak, but she groaned at every sentence.

"Will not my grandfather doat on him? will not my uncle instil into his young mind a love of every virtue? My uncle, Sir, is a good and a learned man."

"If I am killed I must speak," interrupted Winifred. "Fat signifies talking, I tare for to say Mister Gordon knoes fat our Reverent is. Mr. Evelyn for that—did not he larn him his very letters, and all the outlandish reading, and who is a more petter and a more finer man as Mr. Evelyn? more's the pity, I say, and Cot's pity, he should be thrown away on such rubbish as the Runnington's, but Cot is always above the tivel, and he knows best."

Ellen was not displeased at Winifred's interruption; Evelyn she considered as married, or under engagements equal to it, but if he had not, her mind was entirely absorbed in her situation, and too constantly recollecting the goodness of her honored husband, whose memory it was her delight to cherish, to admit one thought of any other, even of Evelyn. It is true, when she mentioned Mr. Meredith as the teacher of her child, his former care of Evelyn very naturally recurred to her memory, and no mother, in any station, need wish to see her son arrive to be more than Evelyn now was; but it was the mother, not the lover, whom this thought gratified. "Yes, Sir," said she, looking earnestly at Gordon, "My uncle was the friendly tutor of Mr. Evelyn."

"I know it all, my dear Madam," answered Gordon, struggling with his feelings, but your son is not, must not be an object of benevolence; he is the just and lawful heir to his father's honors and estate, to rob him of these, or, which is the same thing in effect,
to

to suffer others to do it, is to injure him, and disgrace yourself and the respectable family so justly dear to you: Come, Madam, shew your regard to the memory of the dead, by sacrificing the fondness of the mother to the interest of the friend; no friend to this dear child would wish his removal hence, nor any friend to you or him, but would hasten your presence where only he can be essentially benefited."

Again Ellen kissed the closed eyelids of her son, again she pressed his rosy lips, and then, urged by Gordon, threw herself into the chaise and soon lost sight of Natly Abbey.

As they took the cross road to North Wales, and travelled with all possible expedition, they came in sight of Castle Howel about noon on the third day; the windows were all shut, the hatchment up, no living soul to be seen in or near the grounds, where every thing accorded with the melancholy insignia of death; the terrace, where Lord Castle
Howel

Howel often had accompanied her, explaining his botanical garden under it, an old grey horse he had formerly rode, quietly grazing in the park, with the entire stillness of the day, not a breath of air stirring, were objects of such melancholy note, as drew floods of tears from her eyes. Gordon was admiring the ancient castle, its situation and grounds, without knowing whose it was, 'till happening to see Phillip's horse with the reins loose, and the rider with his handkerchief at his eyes, and the hatchment, at the same moment, he turned and beheld Ellen sunk on the bosom of her servant, shedding torrents of silent tears and seeming literally to enjoy grief.

The servant, who, besides his mourning, was well known at Castle Howel, and the arms on the carriage soon informed the peasants who were passing; the men, having uncovered in respect, drew their hats over their eyes; the women's tears accompanied their courtesies, as they crowded to the doors; even the children stopped their play, and those who
did

did not catch the melting mood from their parents, stood quite still, every muscle of their jocund faces contracted in a dismal stare.

Ellen's emotions grew so violent, Mr. Gordon let down the spring curtains, and endeavoured to turn her ideas to the happy meeting with her family. Understanding they were now within six miles of her native home, he directed Philip to go on, and the painful objects out of sight, she really began to anticipate the joyful reception she knew her family would give her.

Code Gwyn steeple appeared in sight, and amidst a clump of trees the white chimnies of the parsonage.

"My Cot!" exclaimed Winifred, "there's our tear little church; Cot pless us! talk of your Wesmister and your Pawl's, did you ever see such a church as that, Mr. Gordon?"

"And

"And there's my uncle's house," said Ellen a faint smile dimpling on her cheek.

"My Cot! fat are the people all at," cried Winifred, seeing the doors stand open, the houses to all appearance without inhabitants, and a great number of people crowding up the road towards Code Gwyn.

"Ah!" said Ellen, "my grandfather is dead, here is Philip returning, see how terrified he looks!"

Philip rode up to the carriage; to the rapid questions of the Countess and her servant he could give no answer; he stammered and pointed to the crowd, who, now surrounding something they could not distinguish, were slowly returning.

Winifred jumped out, and ran towards the people; Ellen would have followed had she not been forcibly withheld by Gordon, who ordered the carriage to stop, that the crowd might

might pass; a kind of procession advanced in the following order.

First an indiscriminate number of men, women, and children, all devoutly praying the plagues of Egypt might be multiplied on the head of one 'Squire Morgan.

The harper of Code Gwyn, blind and lame, led by a grandson of the coachman's.

Miss Catherine Meredith with a huge folio under each arm, and two bare-headed and barefooted girls, with as many more as they could stand under.

Miss Mary Meredith, with the ebony ink-stand Lady Margaret presented her, attended by a maid with bundles.

Mrs. Griffiths, breathing with great difficulty, and walking between two old female servants.

Sir

Sir Arthur Meredith, in his wheel-chair, carefully drawn by numbers of hearty-looking young men, who shouldered each other for the honor, supported on one side by the Reverend Mr. Edward Meredith, on the other by Miss Agnes; his fine eyes dimmed more by sorrow than age, but his countenance still noble, open and exhilarating.

Close behind hobbled old Griffiths; the procession was closed with all the domestics of Code Gwyn house, and was followed by a second indiscriminate mixture of all ages and sex.

“Cot Almighty pless my soul,” cried Winifred, pushing through the crowd, and taking her aunt’s arm from the woman on whom she was leaning, and passing it forcibly through her own, “Fat, in the name of Cot is the matter fith you all; are you mat, or have you lost your senses? Aunt Griffiths,
are

are you turned fool in your old age, to let them drag my poor tear owld master about like a raree show? Cot pless him for ever and ever, amen, pray Cot."

"Winifred! my dear child," cried Mrs. Griffiths, throwing her arms round her, "have I lived to see you, where is your dear blessed mistress? Oh, my poor Lady broke her heart about her!"

The name of Winifred was no sooner heard than crowds gathered round: Catherine dropped her books, Mary her ink stand, and even Mr. Meredith and Agnes left their father's side, who, soon as he understood the cause, wept like a child; but the air was too keen, and the good old man too little used to it, for Mr. Meredith to be easy at a long stoppage; he just turned his head to the chaise, where Ellen sat—lost in astonishment, with a look that spoke a thousand welcomes, and hastened towards the parsonage; the Miss Merediths, however, followed by Mrs. Griffiths,

fiths, partly hobbling and partly dragged by Winifred, met Ellen, who no longer withheld by Gordon, sprang into their arms, and amid their heart-felt gratulations, the strange procession she had seen no longer occupied her thoughts.

Gordon being applied to for orders from the postillions, bid them stop at a clean looking inn, distinguished by a wooden sign, where all that remained of a lion, formerly red, was a splash of faded paint, very little brighter than the ground of the decayed sign post, where the exciseman sat at the door, smoaking his pipe and explaining, in few words, the procession which moved still in sight, having not yet reached the Rectory.

“The old man you see there,” said the exciseman, “in his wheel-chair, is the Israelite, in whom there is no guile; every body respects, pities, and blames him; he has been such a fool as to mortgage his estate to one of the most avaricious ill principled fellows in
in

in existence, son to one of his own menial servants, a pauper of this very parish; that miserable palsy-headed old creature you see picking sticks is his own aunt; this is the second time he has given notice of a foreclosure of the mortgage; it was once stopped, and, as every body thought, cleared, by that lady's husband," pointing after Ellen.

"You know her then?"

"Know her! God bless her sweet face, I walked down to Castle Howel on purpose to see her set off for London, when she married; she looked, as she always did, more than mortal, but, like the face of Charles Stuart, through all her liveliness I foretold a tale of sorrow in her's, didn't I, Landlord?"

"And so," joined Gordon, seeing an audience would soon gather, as the wheel chair and the Countess had entered the Rectory, "the mortgage was not paid?"

"So

"So Morgan says," answered the excise-man, significantly.

"He say, he be d—d," cried a drunken shoe-maker, "I'd sooner trust that old man and even the hinds of the family, with every bit of leather I have in the world, than I would him with a pair of shoes."

"But," rejoined Gordon, "if it had been paid, to be sure there would be vouchers."

"I don't know that," answered orator Gauge, "for the old Earl, and no better man never breathed, thought every body like himself; he never run in debt here, though they say he did in London, but you could not displease him more than by talking of business; I dare say he never took a receipt in his life; however, so far circumstances prove for the 'Squire, if the mortgage had been paid, the deeds would of course be given up."

"And

“And they are not?”

“No, no, old Mammon has them safe enough in his iron press.”

Gordon thanked his intelligencer and walked on slowly towards the Rectory, moralizing on what he had heard.

But however distressing to human nature in general, and to the particular feelings of those concerned, were the circumstances he had witnessed at Natly, and heard of since his arrival at Code Gwyn, it was fully compensated by the scene which presented itself on his entrance into the great parlour at the Rectory.

The aged arms of the venerable Baronet were fondly growing round the lovely Countess, on whose cheek, pressed to her beloved parent's, the tears of both in mingled joy and grief were blended; joy, at a meeting so unhoped by Sir Arthur, so desired by Ellen—
and

and grief, not for fortune gone, or mansions lost, but for her, who so long had cheered and delighted, whose voice was harmony, whose look was peace, and whose beatified spirit was now in eternity.

The Miss Merediths were in a group, contemplating the graceful form of their admired niece, but observing, with concern, her pale and languid countenance: And Mr. Meredith recollecting that Winifred said a gentleman, a dear good friend of her Lady, was with them, apologized to Mr. Gordon for his inattention, and bid him welcome in his usual placid sincere manner.

It would indeed have been very difficult for the nicest observer to discover a trait of misfortune in the family, except in the face and dress of Ellen herself.

Sir Arthur's last home was entirely forgot while he held the white hand, and contemplated the face of his charming grand daughter:

ter: his daughters regarded no inconvenience but *his*; his son had that equanimity of mind that every place was easy to *him*, where his exertions contributed to the happiness of others; and, as to Ellen, she had lately been innured to such successive reverses both of fortune and habitation, she felt no inconvenience from a change, that considering her long absence, and the death of Lady Meredith, rather perhaps relieved than oppressed her mind: Not so poor Winifred—the large kitchen at the Rectory would barely afford sitting room for the domestics of Code Gwyn, though none of them were retained who were able to get their living elsewhere; and so many old men and women, all infirm, and some almost helpless, grieving both for themselves and their master, were a very uncomfortable society for one, who had, in virtue of her office, reigned paramount among smart footmen and dresty waiting women.

“Plets me,” cried she, impatiently, “my plack hapit will pe spoiled, I hope we are not all to live together in this creasy hole.”

Mrs. Griffiths bid her hold her tongue, which as she did not seem inclined to do, old Griffiths actually held his cane over her head: But times were every way altered with Winifred, who, with poor tear Mr. Joseph in her head, a valuable wardrobe, and 300l. in her possession, was subject to all the caprices a sudden acquisition of wealth is sure to create in weak minds, and much as she had longed to see Code Gwyn, not having any of the nice ligaments that twine round the soul of sensibility, and cement the bonds of love and friendship in her disposition, she in one hour more longed to leave it; "she should not think of Mr. Griffiths' taking liberties with her; she was no pappy, to be peat, Cot pless her; and if she had known how she would be used she would not have persuaded her Laty to leave the Abbey, to come to such a place as Code Gwyn."

"Such a place as Code Gwyn!" Mrs. Griffiths ejaculated.

"No,"

"No," Winifred recalled her words, she meant the Rectory, "for as to Code Gwyn house, she had seen the palace, and a poor thing Cot knows it was to see; and the mansion-house, and petlam, and Cot knows none of them was comparable to Code Gwyn: But for a parcel of servants to be crammed into a hole, no pigger, as poor tear Mr. Joseph used to say, than the hole at Galgutter, especially for servants that have seen the world, and scraped a little fortune together, besides spoiling their cloaths, it was too pad!"

Winifred, a fortune! come that was too much: But Winifred no sooner convinced her uncle she really had in her own possession 300l. besides valuables, than he gave her his word he would leave her a matter of 80l. he had saved, on two provisos—the first, that Sir Arthur did not want it; second that she outlived her aunt; and as the old man thereafter never threatened her with his cane, or addressed her, without preceding Winifred with Mrs. or Miss, and as all the rest of the

servants had an extraordinary veneration for 300l. Winifred condescended to pin up the skirt of her black habit, and entertain them with stories, consisting of truths exaggerated, and truths mutilated, of what she had seen in London, which, considering they *were truths* at all, was great merit in a traveller.

In the parlour the social party had drawn round the fire, and Mr. Meredith having repeated the facts related by the exciseman, with the addition, that as although he was self convinced Lord Castle Howel had paid a great part of the mortgage, if not the whole, he had no proof to produce, and even if he had, the confused state of his Lordship's own affairs at his death, would have been equally embarrassing to his father; that therefore recollecting how often they had regretted not suffering Mr. Morgan to pay himself out of their own property, instead of incurring obligations which they had paid too dearly for.

Ellen

Ellen interrupted him, "My dear Sir, 100
dearly."

"Yes, Ellen," answered he, "when your youth, beauty, and innocence, was consigned to a family who insulted *us* by their false accusation of *you*; who accelerated the death of a woman every way their superior; and who, after all, fancied they made the amende honorable in acknowledging your honor, and their own credulity; we did indeed pay too dear for a mere temporary relief; I therefore resolved to make the matter as easy to my father and sisters as possible, and though we might have staid two months longer at Code Gwyn, face the worst at once; Sir Arthur did not bear the removal so well as I hoped, and indeed expected, but providence sent our dear Ellen in the moment we wanted a comforter, and you see, Sir," said the excellent son, taking his father's hand, over which he affectionately bowed, "every deprivation from God has its fellow comfort, I have found it so in every case but *one*."

Ellen's heart informed her of the *one* he alluded to, she wiped her eyes, and softly asked Agnes what her uncle meant, by accelerating the death of her grandmother.

Agnes fetched Lady Margaret's letter, it had not yet been read through, nor quite unfolded in the exact manner in which Lady Meredith had laid it down, when death-struck by the three first lines, it had remained, and was now put into the hands of the Countess.

No words can express the anguish of Ellen's heart while reading the cruel letter, and informed of the direful effect it had on the good woman to whom it was addressed; nor the indignation the portrait drawn of herself, and the vile insinuation respecting her servant, raised in her mind; she unfolded the infamous scrawl, and, having gone near through it, started, rubbed her eyes, "sure," cried she, my tears, though they may prevent my seeing, cannot make words, my brain I hope is
not

not turned; read, Sir," and she handed it to Gordon, "I beseech you read that passage."

Gordon read, "and to prove to you still
"further how unworthy she is of the honor
"my brother was weak enough to confer on
"her, I this day, by his order, paid Mr.
"Morgan the last thousand pounds, and the
"deeds will be delivered as soon as the shame-
"less conduct of his wife suffers him to re-
"turn to his family."

Astonishment tied every tongue; at length
silence was broke by Gordon. "This," said
he, "is indeed a discovery."

Mr. Meredith took the letter, he turned
pale, and laid it down; his fainted mother full
in his mental view, "I cannot go through it."

"Let me," said Mary, eagerly.

"Read aloud, my child," said the old Baronet, who was grown a little deaf.

Mary read the paragraph, it was verbatim from the letter, and no illusion of the senses.

Mr. Meredith seeing his father's eyes illumined, as in happier days they used to be with pleasure, prudently reminded him of what he had before observed to Ellen, and Mr. Gordon, that as the money was actually borrowed, whether Morgan or the Castle Howels, or their creditors, were mortgagees, did not matter to them.

"Not matter ! son," said Sir Arthur, the spirit of his gallant ancestors lighting in his visage, and pervading his whole frame, "not matter !" said the impassioned old chief, and he actually stood erect, "does it not matter to punish the murderers of your mother, the defamer of her darling, the *unwomanly* insulter of *woman*? Does it not matter to defeat fraudulent avarice to pay debts where they are justly due, to render unto Cæsar the things that *are* Cæsar's? "Oh, blessed spirit," taking off his hat, which, since his deafness he constantly

constantly wore, "if heaven can be more than heaven *now* in this instant thou art among us."

The sudden exertion of an old man, who had not been able to stand on his feet many years, his animated countenance, grey hairs, and elevated voice seemed more than mortal; they all arose, as if by inspiration, and raised their eyes to meet the spirit he invoked, but the strong agitation soon overpowered Sir Arthur, he sunk into the arms of his son, weak and out of breath; Ellen knelt and embraced his knees. "Not matter!" repeated he as soon as he could speak.

Mr. Meredith recanted: "Yes, he saw the advantages of the letter in its full extent."

"It is worth a million to us at this juncture," said Gordon.

"Ah, it will ferret them," said the exulting Baronet.

D 5

They

They now entered into consultations on the situation of Ellen and her child.

Sir Arthur interrupted them, hoped he should see his Ellen's boy before he died.

Catherine doubted not he would be a valorous knight.

Agnes talked of the advantage of his long minority.

"Oh, what a sweet letter this will make," cried Mary, "but I have lost my ebony ink stand."

"No," answered Catherine, "here are the broken remains."

Mary began to lament—"It was the prettiest thing——"

"Why you would not keep any thing belonging to that forcerefs, whose baneful dew has been sprinkled over our family."

Mr.

Mr. Meredith smiled at Gordon, "we are too happy," said he, "to be rational, you and I, Sir, will, if you please, retire to my study."

"Aye, do," said Agnes, "and I'll set the maids to knitting."

Catherine would look after her books—Mary began her letter, "and I," said Ellen, "will take my old seat on the gouty stool, and tell my dear grandfather all that has happened to me since I parted from him. If there are but few young women in the bloom of health, and pride of beauty, who can conceive the exquisite pleasure of thus entertaining an old honored relation; there are many respectable old people who can conceive the delight of being so entertained; but in this instance it was mutual.

CHAP. II.

AN early happy supper concluded the adventures of the day, and Ellen, having prayed for her dear boy, retired to the first unbroken rest she had long experienced.

Gordon and Meredith were kindred souls, they perfectly understood each other; and the latter having made all the requisite communications, they agreed, that after one day's rest it was absolutely necessary the Countess should go to London, and make use of all her interest on behalf of her son, as well as to discover the fraudulent management of the Earl's fortune; Gordon was lawyer enough to know she had a right to go to the town house, which being a leasehold one, was not in the Castle Howel entail.

The

The day, and the only one time would now permit Ellen to pass at Code Gwyn, appeared a very short one to all but Winifred, who was persuaded by David to go and see the little garden at Code Gwyn, and who, when there, could not help peeping in at the old house.

Winifred must, when agitated, either cry or scold, and indeed very often both: Her stomach ached," she said, "to think David should, in the first place, be such a fool as to marry the Castle Howel still-room maid, and in the next, that he should take such pains with Mr. Evelyn's garden, who, to be sure, by this time, was as pad as married to parson Runnington's carrotty daughter, and never, no, never, would see Code Gwyn again; and at the same time have so little regard for a fellow servant, as to let her holly hogs and her polly hauncheses die; now that, and she looked dismally round the silent house, she thought very hard, and, peeping into her aunt Griffiths's room, very cruel, so
cruel,

cruel, that after another mournful look around, she began to cry in a most piteous manner.

David had thought very little on Winifred, and less of her holly hogs and polly haunches, but his eye followed her's, and though he had no aunt Griffiths's room to look into, he began to feel his *neglect* on some *other* cause was really affecting; it was hard, it was cruel, he confessed it, and David's tears began to flow as rapidly as his fellow servant's.

"It signifies nothing locking the gate now," said David, looking wistfully over the green hedge.

"No to be sure, 'tis coot enough I hope for old Morgan."

David not only took out the key but kicked the wicket.

"To use me so cruel," cried Winifred, as they turned from the garden.

"I

"I am sure, Mrs. Winifred," answered David, sobbing, with his head turned quite round, "if I had thought of it."

"Thought," retorted Winifred, "that's worser as any thing, as poor tear Mr. Joseph used to say, the sin of ungrateful is as worse as witchcraft."

"Stop, let me shut the field gate after us," said David, drawing the back of his hand across his eyes.

"Tivel take the gate, let us leave them all open, coot enough for old Morgans."

David agreed to Winifred's proposition respecting the fields, but as all the neighbours cattle would certainly get in, he could not find in his heart to leave Mr. Evelyn's garden open.

"No," said David, "it may be choaked with weeds, but the cattle shan't turn it up,"
and

and as soon as he got rid of Winifred, who took care to place stones against all the gates that the cattle might have free egress, David ran back to lock the wicket.

In the course of Mr. Gordon's conversation with Meredith, Evelyn was not forgot; and as he was the confident of his most secret thoughts at Natly, Meredith was sorry to understand there was more compliance with opinion of others, than inclination of his own, in the proposed match; as, however, from Gordon's opinion and description of the young lady, he could not but think her amiable, and the living a great acquisition, he trusted he would be happy, "as happy as a heart can be under the privation of the first object of its attachment." Meredith sighed, he had never before conversed on the subject, with any person, in whom he could properly confide the secret history of his own feelings—Evelyn was a part of those feelings, to him it was neither safe nor proper to repose a secret in which he was deeply interested; Meredith's

dith's disposition was kindness itself, but inaccessible to friendship, in the common acceptation of that term; he was obliging to every body, intimate with very few, but here was thrown, by accident, in his way, the approved and disinterested friend of the two most dear to him in the world; two, whose hearts were formed to join, but whom fate had for ever separated; and the secret so long hid in the inmost recess of his heart, must some time be revealed, and to Evelyn, who then so proper to entrust as his chosen friend and probable neighbour?

"The young man," said Mr. Meredith, speaking of Evelyn, "is very dear to me."

"So I perceive," answered Gordon.

"I loved his mother more than a reasonable being ought to love the created."

That might easily be, Gordon thought, and smiling significantly, added, he suspected as much.

Meredith assured him he was mistaken.

Gordon smiled again.

"I see," said Meredith, more solemnly, "you adopt a common error, I am not Evelyn's father, I am not so happy."

Gordon, who had set it down for matter of fact in his own mind, looked surprised, and perhaps rather curious.

Mr. Meredith wanted not inducements, but invitations; to open his heart, those invitations, however, Gordon was too polite to give, and there for that time it ended.

Philip was punctual to his hour with the horses, and Ellen took the same leave of her grandfather, who was in a tranquil sleep, she had of her son; she looked at him, and turning to Gordon and Meredith, "Mark the ways of the righteous man, his end is peace." "That is not quite right, I believe," said she, drying

drying her eyes, "but I have often heard you, uncle, say something like it."

Sir Arthur had vehemently pressed his son to accompany the Countess. It was, he said, unseemly, so young a widow should go into a barbarous world, to encounter injury, and perhaps suffer insult, without one natural friend to protect her: The ladies were of the same opinion, and indeed Mr. Gordon, tho' he wanted no encouragement to exert his utmost, thought the measure a proper one; but as there was no time to be lost, and as a curate must be got, to do the church duty in his absence, in whose christian care Meredith must leave not only his parishioners, but his father, he promised to follow, and in the mean time put, at parting, a sealed paper in Gordon's hand, which he recommended to his leisure hour.

The journey directly from Code Gwyn to London was not an hundred miles more than from Natly to Code Gwyn.

As

As they passed Castle Howel, on which Ellen cast a tearful eye, Philip rode up, and taking off his hat,

“We shall return here victorious, Madam, I know we shall.”

Ellen rewarded his officious zeal with a half smile through her tears.

“Fiddle faddle, Mr. Philip,” cried Winifred, who had been silent half sulky and half sorry, “fat signifies victory, fen there is nothing to fin; for my part if please Cot take my owld master, Cot pless his ansum face, pray Cot, and my uncle and aunt Griffiths and the owld harper, and two or three more of the owld fograms, I should not care if I never see it again, now that Satan incarnate have cot Code Gwyn house; for to be sure we list like pigs in a sty at the Rectory, not so much as a dressing room now in the hole house.”

Nothing

Nothing ran in Winifred's head but the change at Code Gwyn, and as on the road where she was too full of home to see Castle Howel, so, on leaving it, her mind still dwelt as intently on the same object, though discontent and disappointment were annexed to every recollection.

Gordon was so anxious to get to their journey's end, he would scarce allow the time for rest, and by ten o'clock the fifth evening the chaise stopped in Grosvenor-Street; Philip had rode on, and the single servant left in the house (Lady Margaret had taken some with her and discharged the rest) appeared without light.

Philip stormed, there were no candles but kitchen ones, the girl knew of: The difference of her reception in that house to what she had been used to, stopped Ellen's breath. Winifred, always at home, ran into the next house, and returned in an instant with two wax lights, and lighted her Lady up, while Philip

Philip discharged the horses, and then ran to Dr. Macsheat's, to acquaint Lady Margaret of their arrival, not doubting but she would instantly fly to receive the Countess. He begged to know if there was any message. The servant went up stairs, Philip waited with impatience in the passage; he rang the servants bell, up came another footman. "Do see if there is a message for me, my Lady don't know where I am."

The man ran up stairs: Philip again rang, at last the Lady's woman, whom Philip well knew, brought her Lady's compliments, she would have the honor to see the Countess in a day or two. Humph, quoth Philip, and returned in as much haste as he went.

"What became of the cook?" said Philip.

"Gone to live with Lady Margaret."

"And the kitchen maid?"

"Turned away."

"And Betty, the upper house maid?"

"Turned away."

"The porter?"

"Set up a public house."

"James?"

"Gone with Lady Margaret."

"Tom?"

"Turned away."

"So what between Lady Margaret, and turned away, my Lady is come to an empty house; I think somebody's turn will be served next. And pray who are you, my bucks?" to two men who sat in the kitchen.

"We

"We are in possession of the goods, for the creditors," answered one of them.

"Oh, ho! then the murder's out; the old rat has undermined the house, and now 'tis tumbling, she's off, is she?"

The men knew nothing of family affairs, they did their duty and no more.

"That's right my bucks, but, come, who has the key of the plate? My Lady's cloth must be laid; to save you a vast deal of trouble, Mrs. Maid of all work, I have ordered the supper from the tavern, give me the keys."

One of the men, who did not like Philip's looks under his affected gaiety, said, he had the keys, but he did not know whether he had a right to—

"Well said, my buck, but do you know there is such a thing as might as well as right,
and

and so, d'ye see, if you have got the keys and won't deliver, I shall make bold to take them, that's all my buck."

The men consulted a moment, and gave the keys.

Philip ran up stairs as alert as if nothing had happened, and found the Countess standing in an agony of grief before Lord Castle Howel's picture, from whence all Gordon's entreaties could not remove her.

Supper, he told her, in the usual way, was on table, and Gordon presenting his hand, she mechanically walked into a small eating parlour, which Philip had contrived to light up, and place every thing exactly in the order she had been used to see it.

Thus immediately at home, the dreary change that affected her at entrance wore off, and she became tolerably composed.

Gordon took an early leave, meaning to lay at an hotel, but Philip's information of the guests in the house changed his intention, and he returned to a chamber the attentive servant directed to be prepared for him; who, having inquired if his Lady had any further commands, received a sweet dismissal from her own lips, with charge to take care of himself, and under pretence of going to bed, sallied out to find some of the stragglers who had been turned away; he returned with Betty the upper house-maid, who also promised to see to the cooking, and Tom, with which acquisition he went to take what he much wanted, rest.

It was not in the morning possible, or indeed needful to conceal from Ellen the situation of her affairs. Mr. Gordon fortunately met his friend, a Scotch solicitor, as well as English lawyer, of fair reputation. They went first to Lord Castle Howel's banker, and examined the books; all the cash was drawn out,

out, except four hundred pounds, before his Lordship's death.

The accounts were exceedingly clear, and the vouchers produced, with this extraordinary circumstance, that, except two thousand pounds taken by the Earl himself, previous to his journey, and a few loose 20*l.* and 30*l.* payable to ingenious people, all the drafts were payable to Lady Margaret Howel or bearer: This circumstance, added to that in her letter, was so striking, Mr. Traverse advised a consultation before a single step was taken; and Gordon having mentioned Lord Claverton, Mr. Traverse proposed waiting on him directly; "we cannot have too many friends," said he.

Lord Claverton was not in town; a circumstance, that, far from disconcerting Ellen, pleased her: The painful hours she had passed in the house where she now was, recurred, with all their causes and consequences, and she considered, that to be on terms of

intimacy with a man, for whom her character had so recently suffered, however convenient his friendship would be neither delicate with regard to her then situation, nor respectful to the memory of her Lord.

Gordon, who pursued with avidity every hope of advantage to her affairs, without giving himself time to reflect, could not obviate Lady Castle Howel's difficulties, though they would not have struck him; he therefore said he would wait on Lord Claverton at Richmond, and accept as much of his service as would strengthen their cause, and not expose the Countess to the false conclusions of the ignorant, or the wilful misrepresentations of the malevolent.

A violent rap at the door announced visitors. "Not at home," were the orders, except to the Macsheans; but Philip ventured to disobey them in favor of Lady Mappleton and her daughter, the amiable Caroline.

In

In proportion to the injuries her Ladyship knew the Countess had sustained, and her present distressed situation, was her kindness, and that of her amiable daughter; after welcoming her to town, she entered with warmth into her affairs, and one of her daughters having married a young counsellor of shining abilities, promised to interest him in the business, and wrote a card, requesting to see Mr. More immediately.

Lady Mappleton was too good a parent not to be immediately obeyed; and Mr. Gordon had the pleasure to see their consultation aided by a volunteer of great sense and knowledge of the law, who approved of Mr. Traverse's motion respecting a consultation, and named the gentleman whose advice he thought of most consequence. The ladies stayed with Ellen the whole day, in momentary expectation of a visit from Lady Margaret, who, at a quarter past five, made her appearance, with Mrs. Morley.

The respectability of Ellen's companions struck them into visible confusion; Lady Margaret complained of ill health, and her looks confirmed the complaint: Ellen, with her long black robes flowing round, and looks of dignified sorrow, did not appear the forlorn, distressed, and friendless widow they expected; not a complaint escaped her, not a single retrospect; she spoke with calm fortitude of her present embarrassments, and with marked contempt of the futile attempts to injure her son; this was a business which also seemed to affect Lady Margaret; and Lady Mappleton conceived it, she said, to be a family concern—"You, cousin Margaret, was extremely attentive to your brother's domestic concerns even since your marriage and his death."

Lady Margaret trembled, she took out her smelling bottle, and Mrs. Morley declared, it was the cruelest thing in the world to mention the Earl before her dear friend,
whose

whose spirits were so weak she could not bear the subject."

"It is a subject, nevertheless, Madam, on which she must make up her mind to bear a great deal." Lady Mappleton's severe look added poignancy to this speech. Mrs. Morley, who felt for neither one or the other of the parties, threw a wonderful stare into her countenance.

"I was saying," continued Lady Mappleton, "the right of our young relation is a family concern, and ought to unite us in one cause; as far as my mite may be of service I—"

Lady Margaret's tremor wore off, *she* would be very happy, *but* the *Doctor* had an insuperable aversion to law suits.

"Odious law suits!" Mrs. Morley declared they were the very horridest things in nature; Mr. Morley had been involved in a chancery suit ten years, and though he knew

the justice of his cause, it gave him a regular fever every sitting, and she believed in her conscience would be his death at last; it had cost she did not know how many thousand pounds.

From the account of Mr. Serjeant Penning, Ellen's dread of the chancery suit was a continual load on her mind.

Miss Holt saw Ellen's soul in her countenance at Mrs. Morley's history of the chancery business; she turned to Lady Margaret, and was exceedingly sorry to hear of the Doctor's *singular* dislike to law, as it was very probable he would find himself *obliged* to attend to some business of his own, in that way, quite as troublesome as the claims on his nephew's estate.

Lady Margaret did not understand Miss Holt, but, whatever might be the Doctor's concerns, she believed he would be able to manage them without "a family subscription."

" Or

“Or a church brief,” added Mrs. Morley, who was by this time thoroughly piqued at the cool return to all her advances towards a renewal of former friendship; for, as Mrs. Morley saw Ellen had lost none of her beauty, and had now reason to suppose she would not, as Lady Margaret foretold, be consigned to her original obscurity, with a poor undone family, who could not help themselves, much less her; she thought it not impossible but she might be again for a short season the fashion, and that, in consequence, it would be the thing to be her intimate: But Ellen, without intending it, had, from mere indifference, said more than a volume of words, and as no medium could be admitted between rejected intimacy and open enmity, Mrs. Morley, not being able to attain the former, adopted the latter.

Cards were now left by Lady Autumn, Lady Daub, and Miss Pendergraft, and presently a thunder was heard.

Lady Margaret and Mrs. Morley's carriages being at the door, His Grace of Dash alighted without ceremony, and as the four footmen belonging to those ladies and two of Lady Mappleton's were in the hall, Philip could not deny his Lady; accordingly, just as Mrs. Morley had been delivered of her church-brief, the Duke of Dash was announced: — Ellen, who did not intend to let any body in but Lady Margaret, was a little confused, but soon resumed her presence of mind.

The Duke paid her a thousand unmeaning compliments, on her improved looks, and took occasion to be profuse in the same way to every lady present, by turns; made large offers of service and friendship, which he begged the Countess would command, and then took his leave without mentioning his son, the most noble the Marquis of Squandervelt; as Lady Margaret and her friend arose at the same time, he handed them to their carriage.

At

At the consultation it was agreed, that as the establishing the right and title of the young heir was the most important business, every other should give way to it: Here was every probability that unfair transactions, with respect to the Earl's personals, would come out, on a close investigation, but as the Countess's credit in asserting the rights of her son, would appear so infinitely weakened by a division of the family, which must be the consequence of a law-suit now with Lady Margaret, they advised disposing of what assets the Earl had left, and putting them into such a train of payment as they would allow, and let all his sister's accounts stand over for the present: A woman who could act in the manner Lady Margaret appeared, and perhaps would be proved to have done, might be a very dangerous enemy: In consequence of this advice, Lady Castle Howel moved into lodgings in Pall Mall, and the furniture, &c. in Grosvenor-Street were advertised to be sold.

Lord Claverton received Mr. Gordon with great civility, but neither his name nor person seemed to strike his Lordship with recollection of any former acquaintance.

He entered with great avowed interest into the cause of Lord Castle Howel's son, which by this time began to be much talked of; and, as he promised, ordered his attorney to aid every step proper to be taken both with money and advice.

Lord Claverton was, at this time, far advanced in a settled consumption, but as his disorder was slow in its progress, as no expence or physical skill were spared, and as he was too desirous of life to neglect the minutest precaution recommended by the faculty, except the voyage to Lisbon, which, as they saw his was a lost case, they forbore to urge, it was attended with all those flattering hopes peculiar to the various turns of the disorder.

Ellen,

Ellen, the dear, the injured Ellen, a widow, her character no longer impeached, in narrow if not absolute dependant circumstances, her family reduced, her son persecuted—was again the idol of his thoughts : Her circumstances would reconcile her to his ill health, her gratitude to his constant attachment, and her society, pure and virtuous as he knew it to be, would help to calm that perturbed state of mind, which, notwithstanding his now regular life, often banished peace from his heart, and rest from his eyelids ; all his large fortune should be devoted to her and hers, and he was self assured, with her every blessing would be his. But this dear and enchanting plan, an improvement on that which had been predominate on his mind from the instant he saw her, must be managed with caution and delicacy ; Mr. Meredith was expected, and to him it should be first opened : He dismissed Gordon with the strongest professions of regard, and begged to see him as often as he could make it convenient, and added

added, he would not intrude on the Countess till her uncle's arrival.

"Do you think, my Lady," said Gordon, attentively looking himself in the glass, "that four and twenty years would make such an alteration as would prevent your knowing or recollecting me, after a tête-à-tête of two hours?"

"Not except you were changed by something more than time."

"Lord Claverton, then Captain Claverton, and I, were sworn brothers in adventure; about that time my Nancy was sent from Scotland to a relation, who kept a boarding school, to be out of my way; I soon followed her, and Captain Claverton being then desperately in love with a young girl, for her fortune, which was very large, at the same school, we met in our peregrinations round the sanctum sanctorum, where our treasures were kept, under lock and key, and at last received

received them out of a window; we had got licences, by contrivance, he gave me my Nancy, and I returned the favor to him."

"Indeed!" replied the Countess, "I never heard Lord Claverton had been married."

"We were pursued," continued Gordon, "Nancy and I not having much fortune got off, but the heiress was recovered, and she wrote us, that dreading the violence of her father's temper, she had prevailed on the governess to conceal the whole affair, which she was the readier to do as her own interest was at stake. The Captain was obliged to decamp soon after, without beat of drum, and the girl wrote to tell Nancy she had reason to fear she was pregnant; we went to the Highlands, and whether she wrote, or whether she died, or what became of her, we never heard afterward, nor probably ever should have thought of enquiring, had we not been honored with knowing Lady Castle Howel."

“Poor thing!” answered the Countess,
“She is most likely dead.”

Letters were brought in from Natly, and opened with trembling eagerness by Ellen. It was a mere nursery journal, the child quite well, and, to Lady Gertrude’s infinite delight, said Ma every time he saw her.

A large packet for Gordon was directed by the same hand. “News from Ireland I suppose,” said he.

Ellen’s colour rose, and she felt now, for the first time since Evelyn’s absence, an unaccountable something swelling in her bosom, so exquisitely painful, it robbed her of all presence of mind, and she burst into tears.

Gordon, without appearing to observe it, took his letters, and walked out of the room.

“Good God!” said Ellen, “is my poor heart never to be at rest? What is the news from

from Ireland to me?" She took out Lord Castle Howel's picture from her bosom as a shield from the error of her own thoughts, it excited a fresh gush of tears, but did not expel the Irish news from her mind.

Mr. Meredith entered, he brought the welcome intelligence that Sir Arthur was well, and perfectly reconciled to the Rectory:—Winifred cast up her eyes in astonishment, and Ellen tried to look happy, but her impatience for the Irish news got the better of every thing; she sent for Gordon, who, it was likely would immediately tell Mr. Meredith if he had heard from Evelyn.

She was again disappointed, as Gordon and Meredith withdrew together as soon as the first salutations were over. She forgot Lady Mappleton's carriage was to fetch her to dine, it had waited half an hour when Philip reminded her; she entered it with the same absence of mind, her eyes fixed without seeing passing objects; one object, however, there was.

was in the world, whose power over her faculties was invincible—Percival Evelyn running by the carriage, out of breath, and unable to make the coachman hear, soon attracted her eyes, she pulled the check, he jumped into the carriage.

“Forgive me, Ellen,” said he, in the utmost agitation, “I know not what I am doing, I just wrote a line to Gordon and was waiting to see him, but I saw you, and thought of nothing else. He had seized a hand that had no power to resist the thousand kisses he imprinted on it; her tongue refused its office, the whole world but Percival Evelyn was forgotten, when the carriage stopped at Lady Mappleton’s door, and Lord Squandervelt stood on the step ready to hand her out; all the world was then remembered, and the strange appearance of a gentleman in Lady Mappleton’s coach struck her with such confusion, she had no power to make an excuse, or to take leave of Evelyn, who alighted and stood pale as death on the step, watching for a look, while

while the happy Squandervelt was uttering a rhapsody of compliments, and even presumed to press her hand to his lips, without her hearing the one or perceiving the other; the turn of the stair, however, as the door was open for another carriage to draw up, presented Evelyn still on the step, despair and anguish on his brow, but he was lifted to immortality by a smile which created a thousand dimples, and a motion of the hand he had just pressed to his lips.

“My dear Ellen, you are so annoyed with lawyers and overwhelmed with business, you will be fit to be made Lady Chancellor,” said Caroline, as she kindly met her at the drawing room door, “that, I suppose, was one of the tribe.”

“No my dear,” answered Ellen, with her usual incorrigible frankness, “it was —” she had got so far, when she recollected the difficulty of explaining, who it was, and on what occasion he had got into the carriage.

“It

"It was who? my dear," joined Lady Mappleton, and as she waited with some apparent curiosity for the reply, Ellen stammered and blushed, but could not get from her conscious lips the name of Evelyn.

"It was the curate of Little Manor, Madam?"

"Who? my dear."

"A friend of my uncle's, the curate of Little Manor."

Lord Squandervelt measured her from head to foot with his eyes, "If this woman," said he softly to an officer who stood leaning over Caroline's chair, "was not so divinely handsome, there would be no bearing her; The curate of Little Manor! So she kept a party of fashion waiting, while she was entertaining a little dirty curate, and actually stopped me in the current of air on the d——d stair-case, while she was kissing her hand to him."

Lady Mappleton thought the occurrence so odd herself, she the readier penetrated his Lordship's sentiments, though she did not hear what he was saying.

Lord Squandervelt heard it was Lord Claverton's intention to offer his hand to the charming widow; we will not take on us to say the Marquis was in love, because that is a sort of passion minds of his class are not often biased by, but certain it is, her person pleased, and her conversation amused him; and there are those among people in possession of means to give and receive the most exquisite delight, who say, to be pleased and amused is the only business of life: Well then, with an object in view, capable of both, how could Lord Squandervelt suffer another to supercede him? He was alarmed, and fancying himself unhappy, prevailed on the Duke, who having now no other son to perpetuate the noble house of Dash, could refuse him nothing, to visit Lady Mappleton, and make a friend of her, previous to his opening his honorable

norable trenches in due form before the Countess.

If the Marquis of Squandervelt, one of the handsomest men of the day, was uneasy about Lord Viscount Claverton, what reason had not his Lordship, who was a much older man, and in ill health, to be afraid of the Marquis; each of these noble enamoratos kept a strict watch over the other. If the Marquis had the advantage of Lady Mapleton's friendship, the Viscount secured one of still greater importance, for being now in town, he had instant notice through Mr. Joseph, whose visits were renewed in Grosvenor-Street, of the arrival of Mr. Meredith, to whom he immediately sent, and who, in company with Mr. Gordon, actually dined with him that day.

CHAP. III.

LORD CLAVERTON, the reader must have observed, was perfect master of human propensities; he well knew Meredith's affection for the Countess, and had long reason to understand family pride had great weight in the Code Gwyn arrangements; their niece, the flower of their race, was accused of a crime, of which her accusers knew her to be innocent, and which was set on foot to gratify disappointed ambition and private malice, at an expence, the fortunes of the Howels of Moor Bank could not support, and must fall to nothing; but it was not his business to make the simple parson acquainted with the little there was to fear, no; it was rather his cue to exaggerate the danger, that
so

so his great friendship might be of more value and importance, and the secret passion he had so long nourished, was too accordant to Mr. Meredith's own feelings to be condemned.

He supposed it not impossible Ellen might accept a fortune and title, the one superior, the other nearly equal to Lord Castle Howel's; and, moreover, be it remembered, that the confessions Lord Claverton had made in his penitent fits were to Lord Castle Howel, a man who never betrayed confidence, even if his own interest depended on it being revealed; and to Doctor Macsheat, who only considered confidence as sacred, as it did or did not coincide with his own private views; in this instance he had no interest in telling the world what he had long known himself, he was therefore secret.

Mr. Meredith's arrival reminded Gordon of a sealed paper he received from him at parting, and which lay in his trunk yet unopened;

opened; ashamed to own he had not had time, or curiosity, to break the seal of a paper committed to him with such solemnity, he rose from table earlier than strict politeness would warrant, on pretence of business, and hastened to the Countess's lodgings, where he had a small room appropriated to business. No sooner had he drawn his chair, and ordered candles, than he perceived another packet, which had also been strangely neglected.

"*News from Ireland, I suppose,*" said Gordon, when he saw Lady Gertrude's large packet, and he was in the act of breaking the seal, when Ellen's emotion put a stop to that act, and obliged him to go out of the room to conceal his own.

"*News from Ireland,*" repeated he to himself, and throwing the packet on the table, walked up and down the room assigning his own reasons for Ellen's tears, and sincerely regretting he had at that time any correspondents in Ireland: He looked towards the ta-

ble, "I told him he must be married, and by this time it is over," thought Gordon, and made a motion to take up the packet, but his heart failed. Mr. Meredith's arrival was announced, and he left it on the table—they returned together, and still he had not curiosity or inclination to see *the news from Ireland*.

Well, thought Gordon, I might as well have opened the old Lady's letter, perhaps it required an answer; before I open Meredith's deposit I will see *what news from Ireland*—he broke the seal, the envelope was from Lady Gertrude, it just contained

"DEAR SIR,

"I can make nothing at all of the inclosed
"from my sister, I suppose Lady Castle Howel
"has her head full enough of her own business, and so indeed have we all, which is the
"reason I send the enclosed to you: I can't
"think my sister right in her conjectures, she
"never had much solidity, and less penetration;

I

“ never can think Evelyn was the kind of
“ man to run mad—there is indeed, I am told,
“ a madness in the Sibley family, and I always
“ thought Runnington himself acted like a
“ lunatic; one does not indeed know, who,
“ or what, the Evelyn’s may have been, he
“ was always vastly shy about his family, but
“ if it should be as Frances conjectures, we
“ have sunk our own and our nephew’s
“ money to a fine purpose, in buying a living
“ for a mad man : I protest to you, Sir, I am
“ bewildered, and shall wait your opinion
“ with great impatience.”

“ I have the honor to be, &c.”

What is all this, cried Gordon, impatiently opening Lady Francis’s letter to her sister.

“ MY DEAR LADY GERTRUDE,

“ Your letter with the black seal excessively
“ shocked me, I was dressing to go to the
“ Castle, the Lord Lieutenant is vastly po-

“ lite to English ladies, and Sir James Sib-
“ ley, I assure you, a great beau, he really
“ reminds me of a certain person you and I
“ have reason to remember : Well, I thought
“ as we had a large party, it would be vastly
“ shocking to break it up, particularly as Sir
“ James depended much on *my* going, tho’
“ upon my honor I was extremely sorry for
“ our poor nephew, and once I was really
“ going to shed tears, but you know what a
“ horrid redness they always leave on my
“ eyes; and, besides, I was quite dressed :—
“ Well, but what I have to tell is a vast deal
“ more terrible, than what you tell me—not
“ about the ball, for we were vastly com-
“ fortable, and happy there, but Evelyn, poor
“ fellow, has actually lost his senses, and this
“ morning eloped God knows where : To
“ be sure, as Sir James Sibley says, it was
“ vastly ridiculous in us to lay out so much
“ money and take such trouble about a young
“ man who was quite a stranger to us. I
“ really thought him excessively agreeable at
“ Natly Abbey; but then, as Sir James says,
“ that

“ that was because one had no earthly being
“ to kill the ennui with: Well, sister, you
“ have no Idea what a charming place Dub-
“ lin is. Evelyn, poor fellow, was affected
“ from the time we left Natly; to be sure he
“ was very attentive, but so dull, and little
“ Jane cried excessively, and would have it
“ Evelyn did not like her, but that, as I said,
“ was impossible, when her father had agreed
“ to resign the living to him, and he was to
“ be so well settled: We had a very tedious
“ passage, which, indeed Sir James Sibley
“ says, is often dangerous, Jane was very sick,
“ and Evelyn amused himself with leaning
“ over the rail of the vessel, once I obliged
“ him to look up, and his face was actually
“ bathed with tears; this I thought odd at
“ the time, but since I know he was mad,
“ you know it is easy accounted for.

“ Well, Sir James Sibley had our letter,
“ and waited in an elegant carriage—Evelyn
“ complained of indisposition, and I thought
“ Sir James rather tiresome, but that was be-

“ cause I was not acquainted with him ; he
“ asked so many questions about Evelyn’s
“ family, and told so many anecdotes of his,
“ which I find is a very antient one, that I
“ saw Evelyn was excessively tired, and Jane
“ greatly offended Sir James, by crying.”

“ Well, next morning Evelyn was ill, and
“ Jane wished to attend him, but Sir James
“ would not suffer it, and you know I am
“ frightened to death at a fever ; however I
“ sent to enquire, and he wrote me several
“ little billets, to beg I would think of re-
“ turning, or permitting him to go by him-
“ self, as he had not his health in Ireland,
“ and little Jane was in a vast hurry to have
“ matters settled ; but really Sir James was
“ so polite, and made so many parties, and
“ so many engagements, I had not a moment
“ to spare.

“ When your letter came, you may be
“ sure I was vastly unhappy, and I told
“ Gibson of it, and left it with her, she
“ says

“ says she only hinted it to Evelyn, and he
“ ran raving mad directly; he gave her a
“ guinea for the sight of the letter, ran up
“ and down the house, packed and unpacked
“ his things, and at last went out without
“ them, and we have not heard of him since.
“ Sir James blesses his stars, and indeed I
“ think it was fortunate he was not married
“ to Jane, for, poor little thing, he might
“ have done her a mischief: I fancy Sir James
“ will give her a husband of his own chusing;
“ he is a prodigious sensible man, and I be-
“ lieve, if I pleased, would be my humble fer-
“ vant; but as I tell him it must be a very
“ extraordinary thing indeed that would make
“ me change my condition.”

“ I am, dear Lady Gertrude,

“ Your affectionate sister,

“ F. H.”

This long letter rendered the reader almost as mad as the writer supposed Evelyn ; but there was another inclosure, signed J. Runnington, which began —

“ Oh, my dear Lady Gertrude!

“ I may write to you though I must not
“ speak to Lady Frances : Mr. Evelyn is not
“ mad, but I am nearly so. Sir James Sib-
“ ley, for he has not once called me child, has
“ a very hard heart, and a cross look, but
“ that you know my poor Mamma always
“ said; he does not like Mr. Evelyn, and
“ you will easily believe Mr. Evelyn does
“ not like him : My papa has not always
“ acted well, but he is my father, and it is
“ grievous to me to hear him constantly
“ abused, and his relations pointed out to me
“ among the very dirty ugly people we daily
“ see in the streets ; but all that is not so bad
“ as a secret I have to tell you—Mr. Evelyn
“ is gone, and God bless him, he loves Jane
“ Runnington as a sister, and will always be
“ her

“her friend, but his heart was long gone,
“and I know who has it, I am sure Mr.
“Evelyn will be happy, for never was there
“a being who more deserved to be so; I
“am vexed he had not been inducted into
“the living, for now, I suppose, my papa
“won’t resign: I think sometimes Lady
“Frances is a greater favorite here than ever
“I shall be, and if she should stay, and dear
“Lady Gertrude would let little Jane be
“her companion and handmaid, it would
“make me happy, and Lord Castle Howel
“would love me, I am sure I should love
“him, and I should then hear all about Mr.
“Evelyn and the beautiful Lady Castle
“Howel; I might have said the good, for she
“is both good and beautiful: God bless her
“and all who love her, and all whom she
“loves.

“Dear Madam, don’t answer this for I
“shall get anger.”

“From your very humble and sincere friend,

F 5

“J. R.”

Gordon now began to comprehend the letters, and while he was considering on what step Evelyn would probably take, the door opened and in came the supposed maniac in propria personæ.

What either said at the precise moment of meeting is of little consequence; Evelyn had a number of questions to ask; Gordon was exactly in the same predicament, and when two friends meet, who each fancy they have a vast deal more to hear, than to communicate, much confusion, and little rationality may be expected.

"So you are not married?" pointing to the letters, was Gordon's first address, after they were seated.

"I hear Lady Castle Howel is left in very indifferent circumstances?" was the pertinent answer.

"Indifferent !

"Indifferent! worse than indifferent," replied Gordon, "they begin the sale of the goods to-morrow, the horses went to the hammer yesterday, and though they were very fine creatures, did not fetch what was due to the livery man — the carriages were sold too to-day, Doctor Macnean, I find, bought the coach."

"I never regretted my poverty but once before," sighed Evelyn.

"And you had never more reason," answered Gordon, "for no living will you get now at Natly."

"But I may be curate to my friend, my beloved protector, and he will receive me with open arms, the Countess I am sure will rather go back to Code Gwyn than any where, and ——"

"Fine castle building," interrupted Gordon "the family are all turned out of Code

Gwyn, Mr. Meredith cannot afford to pay a curate, and there is no room for the Countess."

Evelyn was confounded, "impossible!"

"Very true, though—now the best thing in my opinion for you to do, is to return to your station at Natly, I can see with half an eye." We hope the reader will not cavil at the phrase, it was not only Mr. Gordon's, but as we presume of true Caledonian growth, as it came to the author, in the official letter of a council eminent for learning and abilities! "I can see with half an eye, that old painted Jezebel will marry the Irishman, but as her sister has rather more sense, and won't probably fall in the way of an Irishman, you will easily make your peace with her."

"No," Evelyn said, "the gratitude he could not help feeling for the particular and unsolicited friendship the family had shewn him, had absolutely blinded his eyes and sealed

ed his understanding ; but though he could not see their absurdities, he could not, on impartial retrospect, but despise his own, for standing neuter in his own cause, and suffering two women, who substituted whim and caprice for friendship and generosity, to lay out his future life just as it pleased them, when, as it had proved, a *new* whim or caprice would whistle him down the wind."

"Come, come," answered Gordon, "this is resentment and mortified pride, a vapour of disappointed vanity ; but Natly living is a good substantial thing, will stand wind and weather, long after the old damsels are dust, and, peradventure a certain young Countess may be a fixture at the Abbey."

"Upon my honor you mistake," replied Evelyn, "I have no disappointed vanity in my heart, nor any of the hopes you imply, from the possibility of the Countess becoming as you call it, a fixture at the Abbey ; you little know me, if you believe, I could
form

form one plan dependant on the Countess's future acquisitions, and still less do you know me if you think I could be so selfish as to wish her to accept the fond but humble heart that adores her, in my present situation: No Sir, I have at this instant no wish, with respect to Lady Castle Howel, but to serve her; no ambition but to deserve the name of her friend; while *she* is single, and I am so, which on my part, will always be the case, hope may, perhaps, play round my heart, but it shall not have entrance there—that I love her, you know; that she has grown into my very soul, with its vital stream I feel; and I think, I trust, —” the colour mantled over Evelyn's face, as he *thought* he *trusted*, he was not quite indifferent to her. “I left my curacy at Little Manor abruptly, but Dean Holt has not, I know, withdrawn his good opinion of me; I certainly have, as you say, been building castles in the air respecting Code Gwyn—but my trust is in the master I serve.”

“Oh.

"Oh," replied Gordon, shaking his head, "all this is mere young man's wisdom, you think more of the mistress than the master; however, Meredith will be glad to see you, truant as you are—we will return to Lord Claverton's, where —"

Evelyn again coloured. Lord Claverton, that man was born for my destruction! Is he on terms here? Is Mr. Meredith dining with him? A being he despised, who —

"Young man's wisdom again!" interrupted Gordon, "pretty talking of despising a rich Viscount, who has three Boroughs, and several fine livings in his own gift."

"If he had the world in his gift, I would not go to his house. Oh! I never knew one minute's pain 'till he gave it me; and now, in her forlorn and distressed state, if Ellen should —"

"I

"I shall never see you a Bishop," said Gordon, gravely.

"You will always see me an honest man," returned Evelyn.

"Will you go to Lord Claverton's?" asked Gordon.

A stern No, was the answer.

"Will you stay here 'till I return?"

Another stern No.

"As much as to say," said Gordon, "I am not to go."

"By no means," answered Evelyn, "I will stay to see my friend, but if you have business, go."

Gordon took him at his word, and hastened to inform Meredith of his arrival; it was easy to perceive, during the time he stayed at Lord Claverton's, what his hopes were, and although Gordon would, with great cheerfulness, share his

his little all with Evelyn and Ellen, yet as neither that, nor any thing Evelyn could do, with, or without the Merediths, would amount to a decent support; and as he saw, though Ellen talked and thought with indifference and contempt, of the agremens of an exalted state, she had nevertheless been so used to enjoy them, a return, or rather entrance into common life, would be attended with inconvenience, neither the delicacy of her constitution, injured as it had been, or frame of mind could sustain; and as in such a case as her marrying a curate, when such splendid offers were making, she must not only forfeit the respectable friends, who now countenanced her, but incur their blame, and involve Evelyn in debt and difficulties his whole life would not discharge, he considered it as the wisest and best proof of friendship to concert measures with Meredith to separate them immediately; and when, after Meredith had promised to be at his niece's to receive Lord Claverton's visit next morning, they left his Lordship, Gordon took him into the first
coffee-

coffee-house to tell him of Evelyn's arrival, and communicate to him his opinions and conclusions.

To his surprise he found Meredith extremely cold in the business.

He told Gordon frankly, that Evelyn would and should succeed to his living; that as to the elegancies Ellen had lately been used to, if she was in ease and happiness it would essentially contribute to her health; if instead of going to rest at one or two, and rising at eleven or twelve, she should be obliged to retire at ten and rise at eight or nine; if instead of never walking on foot, she should never step into a coach, will she not be in better health and better spirits, and have a chance of living much longer? If instead of being tied to a debilitated man of fashion, like Lord Claverton, or a dissipated one like the Marquis of Squandervelt, she should vow to honor and obey the companion, friend, and love of all her happy days, will she not
act

act politically with respect to her own happiness, honorable to the young man, and with proper regard to the eternal law of doing as she would be done by? "In this scale," added Mr. Meredith, "so evidently preponderating to the side of Evelyn, I have not put the pleasure I know she will feel in smoothing the pillow of our venerable parent; in reciprocal acts of affection with her family; and the many little kindnesses, I call them so, rather than charities, our power being so contracted, she will, notwithstanding, have it in her power to extend to the distressed; perhaps the amusements of the town, acquaintance with the great, and the adulation of sunshine friends, may be set in the opposite scale; but how intrinsically valuable are those, how futile, and at certain periods, disgusting, are these."

Gordon had one little sneaking corner in his heart where the ardent desire raged to see Ellen again fill the rank and fashion for which he thought her born; but as every other part
of

of it was open to reason, good sense, and friendship, and as this was a family business in which he had no real right to interfere, he said not one word in opposition to Mr. Meredith, but walked cheerfully to Pall Mall with him.

Gordon had no sooner left the room than Winifred entered, but not the little sturdy, discontented, ill-dressed Winifred Evelyn had hitherto seen: From her first attendance on Ellen, finery was so much her delight she was sure, when she called herself dressed, to be loaded with all the colours of the rainbow: The woman of whom the Countess had the upper part of the house, was a french milliner, who soon understood Winifred had three hundred pounds, and as, notwithstanding she had one of the best houses in Pall Mall, elegantly furnished, she was, from being a very fine Lady, often in the predicament of having bills become due, she was not provided with money to pay; she had made Winifred very
smart,

smart, and borrowed two out of her three hundred pounds.

Winifred, with her hair well dressed and powdered, a black silk trained gown, muslin flounced coat, and correspondent linen, then came swimming into the room, and Evelyn with his natural politeness bowed.

“The Lort save us, Mr. Evelyn!” He caught her joyfully in his arms, and, we confess we are at a loss for an apology, for his vulgarity, almost smothered her with kisses.

“Pless my sole, Mr. Evelyn, I am sure nopoty would think you was a parson, see how you have rumped all the powder out of my hair, and I am going to a party at Lord Claverton’s.”

Evelyn thought every body talked of Lord Claverton.

“Well,

“ Well, but Mr. Evelyn, have you prought me a fever? Pray where is your prite? I suppose *we* shall visit her; but, dear me, we visit none but the quality, quite different sort of people than used to come to our house in my Lord’s time, quite soper quizzies, as Mr. Joseph calls them. Lort pe praisht we are comed from Natly, such a tull treary place; and then, Lort help us, we went to Gode Gwyn; but such hups and downs in this world—there’s old Morgan, pilzeebub will certainly put his cloven foot on all his sins and iniquities, he has turned my owld master out of Code Gwyn, uncle Griffiths, and all; and there, to be sure, I had not so much as a hole to dress in by myself at the Rectory, though the Reverent made bed rooms of the great hay-loft, Cot knows where he must cram the tithes at harvest, ah Lort knows nothing looks as it did put your little carten, for all my holly hogs and polly haunches are tead and cone, what we must all come to, Mr. Evelyn, our poor Lort, you know, proke his neck, and the tear papy is cheated out of
his

his pirth right, and my Laty and I, Cot help us, if she don't marry Lort Claverton —"

Winifred might have run on a long summer's day, if she had not unfortunately mentioned Lord Claverton, a lapse that reminded Evelyn of her breach of promise to him, and of the many difficulties in which her babbling had involved Ellen.

He therefore, in no very soft tone, told her it was his opinion, the best thing that could happen to her Lady was to get rid of *her*, and before she could get so far the better of her anger and astonishment as to answer, he proceeded to upbraid her with her duplicity, and demanded a locket, the only valuable thing he ever was master of, which had been given him by Mr. Meredith, with solemn charge to preserve, and which having taken out two locks of hair which was in it, and replaced them with one of his own, he had given to Winifred for Ellen, but which she was prevailed on by Mr. Joseph to say nothing about, but consign it to his care."

Winifred's conscience had always upbraided her with this breach of trust; and guilt confounded, said, when she come from Lord Claverton's she would give it him.

Lord Claverton again! Evelyn was in a rage, and had not Mr. Joseph happened to call at that instant, in a coach, to take her to the party, we will not answer for the consequences.

The meeting between Mr. Meredith and his cleve was the true feast of reason and flow of souls, they supped together with a cordiality that made the meal a banquet, and parted before Lady Castle Howel's return.

The curate of Little Manor attracted more than the Marquis, and Lady Mappleton; Mrs. Holt, who was come to visit her Ladyship, and had only arrived an hour, advanced in the most friendly manner to our heroine, and after the usual compliments, asked if it was Mr. Evelyn, of whom she was speaking? and

on being answered in the affirmative, spoke of him in such terms as partly reconciled Lady Mappleton to the *curate*, but rather increased Lord Squandervelt's spleen, who, in consequence, instead of making the most of an opportunity, Ellen's time of mourning would not with propriety allow at her own house, if she had been inclined, he was barely civil to her; whether she perceived his mighty spleen or not we will not pretend to say, but if she did, her mind was taken up by an humbler subject.

In course of the evening Lady Mappleton took occasion to ask Ellen if there were any thing or things in the Grosvenor-Street house she particularly valued, as she intended to be at the sale? No, Ellen answered, the creditor had, of his own motion, sent all her books, which as Lord Castle Howel chose them, were of most value to her.

It was near two before the party separated; and Ellen was not up when Gordon proposed

going once more to Grosvenor-Street, to try the key Ellen thought belonged to the writing table, but which, on trial, did not appertain to it, nor was that piece of furniture locked.

Every drawer had been carefully sealed by Lady Margaret, who had not taken any further notice of Lady Castle Howel than to send her a formal invitation to dinner, which she declined accepting.

Gordon, Meredith and Evelyn walked to Grosvenor-street, where also they met Lady Margaret and the Doctor, seeing, as the latter *said*, if there were any particular thing, Lady Margaret would like,—but as *appeared* from the avidity of the former in searching, every drawer, rapping her knuckles against every partition, and trying all the locks, on the same search with themselves.—

The truth is, among a parcel of spare keys, in one of the Earl's private drawers, Lady
Margaret

Margaret had met with the fellow to the one tied to the ribbon, which so puzzled Gordon; the curious construction of the wards, and form of the key altogether, persuaded him it belonged to a lock of consequence, which he *hoped*, and her Ladyship *feared* to discover; but after the strictest scrutiny the search was concluded, to the disappointment of one party, and satisfaction of the other.

All the world crowded to the auction, and as his Grace of Dash, and the Marquis Squandervelt, were there, for the express purpose of buying up every article that had been the Countess's; as Lord Claverton, it was well known, would attend for the same purpose; and as Lady Mappleton, and a large party of friends were also expected to bid high for the beautiful furniture, of the Countess's suite of apartments, these at least were expected to fetch a great price.

When Lord Claverton entered, Meredith made way and procured him a seat, but such

was Evelyn's antipathy or jealousy, or whatever the reader please, he immediately left the party, and found himself by Mrs. Holt, who most affectionately accosted, and introduced him to Lady Mappleton.

That is a prodigious fine young man, said Duke Dash, looking through his glasses, and speaking to Caroline Holt, who is he?

Lord Squandervelt was near enough to hear Mrs. Holt's introduction, and to his extreme mortification, saw that the curate of Little Manor, dressed and powered as smart as a clerical Adonis could dress and powder, had the personal advantage even of himself; and that tho' a curate, and a country one, he had a confidence in himself, that while the crimson glow of modesty animated his countenance, gave an unspeakable grace to the compliments he was paying a knot of Ladies, whose eyes, if eyes are to be credited, said as Duke Dash did; "that he was a prodigious fine young fellow," so much indeed

deed was he the object of general observation, that Lord Claverton saw and immediately recollected him.

Certain natural antipathies have been variously explained, by different casuists and philosophers; there was but one way of accounting for that, which in this instance equally reigned in the bosom of the peer and the curate.—

Had a basilisk struck the eye of his Lordship, it could not have had a more baneful effect; weak and enervated as he was, his pallid looks were lightened, in the hope of obtaining the woman he really loved; the rival of his first impression stood before him, towering in elegance of person and improved manners, above all compeers,—in the full bloom of perfect manhood, health and vivacity; destitute only of the one thing, which his declining health and low spirits, told him, in a language his soul understood, amounted to nothing; he complained of ex-

cessive heat, and instantly every body was in motion to give a sick Lord air.

The auction began, and was proceeding in a very flourishing way, when a fresh coloured old man, with a brown wig in small curls without powder, a brown furtout buttoned close, an India handkerchief tied loose round his neck, brown silk stockings and square toed shoes, who Mr. Meredith felt his blood rise at, and who Lord Claverton and Evelyn both recognized to be Squire Morgan, beg'd to know whether Mr. Auctioneer could put up a couple of articles, to oblige him, as he wanted to go out of town, which was in the catalogue for to-morrow.

Mr. Auctioneer, who was a very polite and accommodating person, could not stir a step, in so important a measure, without taking the sense of the company.

What articles were they? the company must know that, before they could decide.

One

One was an iron chest in the library.

A loud laugh; "Oh, pray let the gentleman have the iron chest."

"Ay ay, pray do," said a silversmith, who waited to bid for the plate, "if any man in England can fill it, it is Mr. Morgan."

"Ah! what old mammon," cried a young foxhunter, "are you there?"—

Another loud laugh, which Squire Morgan bore with great philosophy.

The second article was the porter's chair, which truth to say, was a very comfortable one, high backed, semicircular, stuffed with down, and covered with fine spanish leather.

Another laugh, and the company, to whom he again appealed with wonderful deference, agreeing, Mr. Auctioneer promised to put up the iron chest and arm chair, as soon as the room they were now about were sold.—

Mr. Morgan, with many and many a low bow, returned thanks to the company, his bows were as usual very judiciously varied, and adapted to the different rank of the company, from Duke Dash to the silversmith, and he retired with a joy he could not conceal, to contemplate his intended purchase.

“Damme, we’ll work the old boy up with his iron chest,” said the foxhunter, winking at the Marquis, who returned the wink, and as this agreement was made in hearing of every body present, it occasioned much observation, some laugh, and a good deal of curiosity.—

When the lot was called, the porters declared it was too heavy to move, and all who chose to concern themselves in the business, went to the library to look at it.

The chest was one made for Lord Castle Howel, by his own particular directions, and from a drawing of his own; it was square, and so indented and painted on the outside, as to look

look like a parcels of folio volumes but as excepting that, it had nothing extraordinary, and the silversmith declaring, that to his knowledge, the squire never read a book in his life, but the London directory, it was not supposed he would bid very high; the young blades were however resolved to try.

Mr. Auctioneer beg'd the company, would do him the honor to name a beginning.

Mr. Morgan offered two guineas.—

“Two guineas, old mammon, D—e I'll give ten,” said the foxhunter,

“Pounds or guineas?” asked Morgan, with a tremor on his voice and a very low bow.

“No matter,” said the Marquis, “I'll give twenty.”

“Pounds or guineas?” with a lower bow and additional tremor on his voice.

G 5

“Now

"Now d—me Marquis that's not the go, to bid against me, come d—me I'll go twenty five."

"Thirty," said the Marquis.—

Morgan loosened his silk handkerchief for air, and kept edging in towards the table, *but* as he did not speak, it was the general opinion, the knowing ones were taken in.—

After a pause, when the Auctioneer had declared again and again, that was the third and last time, the bow and the question were repeated, "did your Lordship mean pounds or guineas?"

"D—me, there's life in the game yet," cried the overjoyed foxhunter,— "Thirty-five pounds, mind, not guineas."

"Forty for the Marquis," said the Auctioneer, obsequiously regarding his look.

"Forty-

"Forty-five."

"Fifty."

"Fifty-five."

Morgan had now wedged himself into a position fronting the Auctioneer, next the table, when in his extreme agitation he threw down his hat, and turned the hind part of his wig front, and while the two jesters were out bidding each other, with sham eagerness and the room in peals of laughter, the head of poor Morgan was in perpetual motion, for the foxhunter being on one side of him, and the Marquis on the other, anxious to watch the motion of each party, turned his head from the foxhunter to the Auctioneer, from him to the Marquis, &c. his lips every moment severing to speak, but closing at each bidding which with his heat, and situation, were such provocatives, the Marquis could contain no longer, and the foxhunter catching the laugh, the Auctioneer, who, tho' he was so very

obsequious, and joined in the laugh, saw his precious time wasted in a joke, took the opportunity to knock down the iron chest, at fifty-six, to Mr. Morgan.

"I advise you Mr. Auctioneer," said the foxhunter, with affected gravity, "to knock the chest to pieces, before you let it go out of the house, for I'll be crucified if old mammon would pay so dear for iron."——

"Depend on it," joined the Marquis, "it has a secret lining of bank notes."

Morgan bowed to the ground, "my Lord," said he, readjusting his silk handkerchief,—"I am a very private obscure man, but I have my whims as well as my betters,—and humbly hope, as iron chests are an article of furniture, seldom wanted by those of your Lordship's description, and never by those of *your's*," bowing to the foxhunter, "I may be permitted to buy *one* dear bargain in my life time, while my superiors have the privilege of purchasing so many every day.—

The laugh being now turned, and the sale going on, he retired with renewed spirit, and was followed by some of the idlers, among whom was Evelyn, to the library.

If the chest had been, as Lord Squandervelt said, lined with bank notes, it could not have been more the object of Mr. Morgan's anxious attention; he received the key with hurried eagerness and opened it, eagerly exploring every corner, then shut it down, and calling the porters, was on the point of turning the key,—yet one more look he could not help bestowing on the inside.

Evelyn, who had been moralizing on the whole transaction, kept his eye constantly on him; he knew the rapacity of his disposition; had heard from Meredith of Lady Margaret's letter, and tho' he had himself, in company with Gordon, examined that identical chest, before the auction, he could not help thinking there was something very extraordinary in a man, who would make
fifty

fifty excuses rather than change a shilling, giving fifty-six pounds for an iron chest not intrinsically worth ten.

Morgan opened the chest once more, he looked round,—the few people in the room were looking at some fine prints, except Evelyn, who pretended to be reading; impelled by that providence which over rules all our actions, he reached his right arm into the chest, he felt about with his fingers, and instantly the cover which was exceeding weighty, fell down and crushed the bones of his arm in a miserable manner.—

The unfortunate man fell down with extreme anguish, and twisted the already disabled limb in the fall, in such a manner as also to put the shoulder quite out.

Evelyn ran to sustain the fainting body, he opened the chest to liberate the arm, but what was his astonishment, to perceive in the bottom of the chest a square small *lid*, which
closed

closed as he put up the cover; he gave a cry of joy, and sent in for Meredith: By this time the accident had reached the auction room, and the crowd surrounded the fainting Morgan, Meredith came in, Evelyn locking the chest, charged him to be careful of it, and then lifted Morgan to a sofa.

A surgeon, besides Mr. Macsheat was present, they cut his sleeves and shook their heads, a chair was ordered to convey him home, — Evelyn finding it was with difficulty they could keep life in him, sat at his back, chafed his temples and supported him in his arms.

“Where am I going?” said he, as they were lifting him into a chair.

“Home, sir,” answered Evelyn, in a voice of tenderness and sympathy, “you are hurt and had better be with your family.”

Morgan looked in Evelyn’s face, he started, tears of anguish burst from his eyes, — “I have no family.”

“Who are *you*? are you not the boy? the boy that Meredith?”——

“Yes, sir, I am the boy that owes his *all* to Mr. Meredith.

Morgan again fainted and did not revive till laid on the bed, at a lodging he had in Suffolk-street,—Evelyn had the charity to stay with him till he recovered, which was not till the exquisite pain occasioned by the surgeons examining his arm had roused him to a sense of torture.

The first object that met his eyes was Evelyn, still in the charitable act of supporting him,—he gazed on his face,—“Yes said he,” with a deep groan, “I see it is so.” Immediate amputation was necessary; “will it save my life? cut me to pieces so you do that, let me live a little while, but a little, for reparation, for repentance!”

The surgeons told him, much depended on himself.

"Will *you* stay?" to Evelyn, who promised he would.

The operation was performed, and the composing draught being swallowed, Evelyn thought himself so far absolved from his promise, as to have a quarter of an hour to take one glance at Ellen.

While Evelyn was supporting Morgan at the auction, Meredith asked Gordon, if he had read the paper he gave him.—

Gordon really blushed to say he had not.

"Then you are deprived of the gratification, I feel in an observation, which confirms my favorite thesis."

"And pray what is that?"

"That there is no such thing as natural instinct, except when aided by memory."

"I deny

"I deny that," said Gordon.

"Excis homo," answered Meredith, "Per-cival Evelyn would have been just as attentive, and felt just as much for the poorest beggar, as he is now feeling for the only relation I know of, he has in the world; that miserable old man's only child, was Evelyn's mother, and if I have any skill in the cast of the countenance, he now remembers, how often I have told him his duty; but that is not any more than Evelyn's compassion instinct; one is the sting of conscience, the other the dictates of humanity."

"I must go and read the paper directly," said Gordon.

"I shall keep these objects in my eye," answered Meredith, and they parted different ways, without thinking on the iron chest.

Gordon eagerly opened the sealed parcel, the first paper that dropped, was a receipt,
signed

signed James and Elizabeth Thomplon, for nursing of master Horatio; then several letters full of tender enquires, and charges from a mother to the nurse of her child, signed E. C. "where have I seen this hand?" said Gordon to himself,—then the paper wrote by Mr. Meredith, giving an account, which the reader has already seen in vol. i. of his passion for Morgan's daughter, and her elopement,—my health "from this period," he wrote, "became injured, and my mind deranged, my dreams and waking thoughts were full of Elizabeth; I saw her in deep waters; on the top of precipices; surrounded by wild beasts; exposed to want; in short there was no evil, real or imaginary, but what I saw her environed with,—her death, when I heard it, was at first some relief. Dear woman had she known my heart, and confided in my friendship, what evils might she not have escaped; the vague and indirect accounts that reached us, left all uncertain but the event itself,—I went to her obdurate father, as soon as he arrived

“rived at his manor, I besought him to ease
“my heart, by the particulars of her release :
“—Gloomy and reserved, he insisted on my
“leaving him, said she was to his great joy
“*dead*, and had it no more in her power to
“disgrace him; disgrace him! alas! could
“Elizabeth disgrace her father; was she not
“formed, were not the purity of heart design-
“ed to honor her heavenly father!”—my mind
continued to be harraffed, my thoughts never
wander’d from her grave, and after near three
years suffering under a nervous fever, I at
length thought if I could see the grave, which
thus haunted my imagination, I should be easy;
—I got from his servant the direction, and set
off on my melancholy pilgrimage, the end of
which I reached, my eagerness increasing as I
drew near the spot, which held her dear
remains.

He had placed a white marble urn on a
black slab, and I saw that, near the ostenta-
tious monument, lay the remains of Eliza-
beth Morgan,—but where said I, and looked
wildly round.”

“What are you looking for, sir?” said a
“very poor but neat woman, with a jug of
skim milk in one hand, and a beautiful boy
in the other.

“The place, the very place, answered I
“wildly, where Elizabeth Morgan was
“buried.”

“Ah, sir,” replied the woman wiping her
“eyes, “you now stand, as near as I can re-
“collect, on the very spot, she is a saint I
“dare say, but as to her father—”

“Name him not,” I answered, “be gone,
“and in bitter regrets, I threw myself on the
“ground.”

“If you loved the mother so well,” said
“the woman, “you will bestow your charity
“on her child.”

“Her child! Ah Gordon, it was indeed
“the child of my Elizabeth, he looked in my
“face, he came instantly to me.”——

“We

“ We are starving, sir,” said the woman,
“ and I have brought him to his parish, else,
“ God knows, I would not part with him, I
“ must leave him in the work-house, they have
“ promised to receive him, they will make
“ his hard hearted grandfather maintain him,
“ I cannot.”

“ Gordon, you are a good man, you are
“ married to the woman you love, but to
“ know what I felt at this instant, you must
“ have loved the soul of Elizabeth.”

“ The woman directed me to the house,
“ where she died ; I sat on the chair, I slept
“ on the bed that was her’s.”—

“ She had gone to some man who kept a
“ publick house at Chelsea, formerly a soldier,
“ he took lodgings for her, and himself and
“ wife attended her, during her lying in ; for
“ Gordon, she was pregnant when she left her
“ father’s house ; the child was put to nurse,
“ and

“ and handsomely paid for, never was a son-
“ der mother, “ nothing,” said the poor wo-
“ man, “ was too good for me or my family,
“ while the dear Lady lived ; but her health
“ declining, and change of air being ordered,
“ she was attended to Highgate, by the Pub-
“ lican and a maid, who were never more
“ heard of at Chelsea,” nor did the nurse
“ know of her death, till two months after it
“ happened, when she traced her to High-
“ gate, and was directed from thence to Mr.
“ Morgan’s; “ but, oh sir,” continued she, “ I
“ no sooner produced the dear child, than he
“ spurned me out of his doors, called me
“ cheat, and after all, when I offered to prove
“ I was no cheat, he swore he would put the
“ little innocent son of his only daughter,
“ to a parish, and as soon as he could walk,
“ apprentice him to a chimney sweeper ; I told
“ him he should not do that, and took the
“ poor child home again ;—but it seemed
“ the poor people did not prosper according
“ to their desert, the man who was a gar-
“ dener lost the use of his limbs for one whole
“ winter,

“ winter, and having a family of their own,
“ the woman walked to Highgate, and told
“ her piteous tale to the parish officer, who
“ promised he would make old Morgan pay
“ for the child, without apprenticing him to a
“ chimney-sweeper.”

“ I need not tell *you* I paid the woman,
“ and took the child; she had got a toy, she
“ said, with glass on one side, and she be-
“ lieved gold on the other, which in all her
“ poverty she would not part with, because
“ his mamma gave it the child to play with,
“ the last time she saw him, and which by
“ accident, was wrapt up in his cloaths, when
“ she brought him home, this she would
“ send me, and she was as good as her word.
“ From that hour to this, I have never
“ dreamed of my Elizabeth, but I have seen
“ her happy, and I became insensibly so my-
“ self; I put my little charge to board, with
“ a decent woman, till he was old enough
“ to come under my own instruction.”

“ I found

“ I found all the mother in his disposition,
“ amiable, affectionate, and docile; his apprehension quick, his memory retentive, and
“ his application beyond any thing I had met:
“ With such dispositions, and such talents to
“ improve, I could not answer it to my conscience, not at least, to let Elizabeth’s father
“ know the treasure within his reach; I knew
“ his immense riches, and though all his father-in-law’s estates were settled to return to
“ *his* family, if Elizabeth died unmarried, yet
“ thousands remained to do him honor in such
“ an heir, had he been wise enough and just
“ enough to adopt him; twice I made unsuccessful efforts in favor of my young friend,
“ and each time was spurned from his house;
“ nothing could convince *him* that I acted
“ from a virtuous regard for his daughter; that
“ I made a journey to London to shed my
“ tributary tear on her grave; that I would
“ adopt her illegitimate offspring by another
“ man; he perhaps examined his *own* heart,
“ and found no such sentiment *there* as those
“ which actuated mine, and thence doubted

“ any such existed: Enraged and basely suspicious, he charged me with being the ruin of his daughter, and the father of her child; ignominious was the title he gave him, and bitter were the oaths he swore never to leave him a shilling, or forgive me, whom, notwithstanding the solemn asseveration, my regard for Evelyn induced me to make, he looked on as his daughter’s seducer; and he has kept his word, it is me he pursues more than our estate, and his revenge is more insatiate than even his avarice: The whole matter is a secret to my family, and young Evelyn; I want courage *now* to tell him *whose* he is, but if I die before him, it is fit he should know: Who his father is is an impenetrable secret, but time may develope even that, and it is to lend him every assistance on that head I repose this confidence in you; for, as to the unnatural father of his mother, I do not now even wish he may adopt him; I should be sorry to see Percival Evelyn, a name I gave him, blush for his progenitor.”

Gordon

Gordon read the packet with a mixture of wonder and attention, and before he had laid it down Mr. Meredith came in to receive Lord Claverton and Evelyn, to pay his respects to the Countess.

Always particularly *neat* in his person, there was little more to be added to the habit of a clergyman, that little, however, was not wanting: His hair had been deranged by the accident of Morgan, as well as sitting behind to support him, both on the bed and sofa, but now fresh dressed, elegant and graceful, before Lord Claverton was well seated, or Ellen in the drawing room, Mr. Evelyn was announced.

There is something particularly interesting to all invalids, in the voluntary attentions of the young, the gay, and the healthy. Morgan was robust and corpulent, he had no claims on Mr. Evelyn's friendship or esteem, but, judging from his transactions with a family, to whom the latter was bound in duty and

affection the precise contrary—yet, with humanity and strength that astonished all the lookers on, among whom was Lord Claverton, he lifted Morgan, while fainting with agony, supported and attended him home, with a tenderness and compassion in his manner, that pleased even a man who had ever disliked him; Lord Claverton was often as helpless from weakness, as the unfortunate Morgan, from the dreadful accident he met, and he could not help thinking the assistance of such a man preferable to the attendance, of even Macsheat. Thus, then, with a new-born complacency, as soon as Evelyn's bow was made, and they were seated, his Lordship enquired after Morgan.

Evelyn shook his head, and then recollecting the small aperture in the chest, asked if it had been examined.

Meredith answered, there was nothing in the chest, but was not a little astonished at what Evelyn told him: They sent to Mr.
More

More and Lady Margaret, to request their presence, and went to Grosvenor-Street, leaving Lord Claverton in Pall Mall.

Ellen had been apprized of one male visitor, and her heart forewarned her of another; she spent some little time longer than usual at her toilet, and descended with a grace and manner all her own. Gordon not being present when Meredith went out, stepped into the drawing-room for his hat, and discovered Lord Claverton on his knees before the Countess.

His Lordship's looks testified chagrin and disappointment. "I have been endeavouring, Sir," said he, addressing Gordon, "to soften marble; I have been entreating this Lady to give herself a protector, her son a father, and me the only woman I ever loved; can you suggest nothing to strengthen my plea? You have influence, Sir, you shall never regret your politeness: Come, Mr. Gordon, say something for me."

The only woman he ever loved! thought Gordon, how can people forget themselves so?

Ellen arose—"When I tell you, my Lord, not only my judgment but my inclination is averse to your proposal, it is not polite to press me; I could not give Lord Castle Howel's son a father, who entertained, in his life time an improper sentiment for his wife; but, independent of that, for I see, my Lord, you are going to plead, that whatever were your sentiments, you did not offend me with them; I confess I cannot command my esteem, it is not in that light disposed to Lord Claverton."

"But might not time, assiduity?—"

Ellen begged she might not be urged, she was obliged to Lord Claverton for his kindness to her son, but she could be no more than obliged.

Gordon

Gordon thought it a pity she should not accept Lord Claverton ; and the instant he saw Evelyn, he would have thought it pity if she had.

Lord Claverton was visibly affected ; he regretted he had not waited, 'till time and the attention he resolved to pay the family, should have made him the friend in her heart he saw he wanted. He left compliments for Mr. Meredith, with request to see him, and took his leave.

“God bless me !” said Gordon, turning from the door, up to the glass, “I should have known Lord Claverton any where, do not you think it very odd he should not recollect me ?”

“Upon my word, except you are very much altered,” answered Ellen.

“Altered, not at all,” interrupted Gordon, “I am exactly the same, except I then wore

my own red hair, and have now a brown wig; and except having had the small pox."

"And except being twenty years older."

"Well," said Ellen laughing, "I do not upon the whole think it so very wonderful, his Lordship does not recollect you."

"And, on the whole, Madam," replied Gordon, "I am very glad to see you laugh, though it is at myself, 'tis a good sign."

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Ellen, "my bosom's Lord sits lighter on his throne than I have long felt him."

Lady Mappleton was announced. "Bless me, my dear," said her Ladyship, "what a shocking accident that poor old man had to-day, I declare he frightened us away from the auction, but I have bought you a world of things, because I thought you would like to take them from me, rather than from that
poor

poor pallid looking mortal, Lord Claverton. Duke Dash and his son have also been great purchasers for you."

"For me ! Madam," answered the Countess.

"Yes, for you; come, my dear, you must not be a prude, you must be in present Marchioness of Squandervelt, and in future Duchesses of Dash; it will be a great alliance; the Duke really talks nobly, and it will be the pride of my heart to see you the envy of those who now affect to pity you."

Lady Mappleton then shewed a letter she received that morning from the Duke, and not suspecting it possible a woman in embarrassed circumstances, who would not literally have a shilling, and whose son was obliged to his father's relations for supporting his claim to title and fortune, would, or could refuse such splendid offers.

Ellen, however, convinced her the thing could be, and also told her, the recent offer of Lord Claverton.

Lady Mappleton did not wonder at her rejection of *him*, but the Marquis, one of the handsomest men of the age, she could not comprehend it; she hoped this Phoenix, as Mrs. Holt called him, this curate, had not got into her head—"You blush, upon my honor, my dear Countess, the world will think it exceedingly silly if he has."

"The world is, on all occasions, too good to me," replied Ellen, "but though I do not allow its infallibility in all points, I confess it would censure with reason, if I were to marry this curate, and give so obscure a man a paternal authority over the Earl of Castle Howel's son."

"Very prudent, my dear Ellen," said Lady Mappleton, kissing her cheek, "charmingly expressed, I thank you for the family: I confess

feels when I saw your indifference to the first match in England, I really *did fear* the curate, for he certainly is a very fine young man, and his humanity to the old man when he met his accident charmed us all; but a poor parson for Lady Castle Howel! a curate!—”

“And yet, Madam,” replied Ellen, “this poor parson, this curate, was the first, and will be the last choice of my heart.”

“Ah! my dear,” returned Lady Mappleton, shaking her head, “after such an acknowledgment, what confidence can one place in your promise?”

“The utmost,” answered Ellen, “It is a promise witnessed by my own conscience, registered in the respect I owe my Lord’s memory, and sealed with my last kiss on the lips of my dear boy; his father raised me to his rank, and his mother will not dishonor her son; but neither will she dishonor herself by giving her hand to the first man in the

world, while her heart and all its faculties are devoted to the humble object of her first esteem."

Lady Mappleton was struck, but she affected to treat the matter lightly. "All this is very fine, my dear, but it will not support your rank."

"I did not promise to do that," replied the Countess, "*I* only promised not to dishonor it."

The subject had brought rosy strangers into Ellen's cheeks, she looked remarkably lovely, fit, as Lady Mappleton told her, to grace a diadem. When Mr. More, Meredith, Gordon and Evelyn entered, her Ladyship was a sedulous observer, and she could not help allowing, if Ellen kept her promise she would act with more fortitude than in the same case, she could do herself.

Mr.

Mr. More having paid his respects, and it being the first time Evelyn had seen Ellen in public, Mr. Meredith introduced him, he spoke low, trembled, touched her hand, and retired to a seat.

"I could not have thought," whispered Lady Mappleton, "that young man could look so much like a fool."

A servant brought a message from Mr. Morgan, he was awake and wished to see Mr. Evelyn.

"I will not go," said he, with resolution, "the man is incorrigible, on the brink of eternity, his thoughts are employed on fraud."

Mr. More said it was too true, and informed the ladies, that on their arrival in Grosvenor-Street, to re-examine the iron chest, they found Morgan had sent for it away; hardly expected to live the day out, yet he resolved to devote *that* day to his former practices;

practices; he added they immediately went to his lodging, where his people, acting no doubt by his orders, denied any such thing had been brought there.

“Oh, what an error!” cried Evelyn, passionately, “to let it go out of sight.”

Meredith and Gordon excused themselves on their ignorance of what Evelyn had discovered, they thought they had examined every part of it.

Another messenger came from Morgan, to request to see Mr. Meredith, who instantly attended him.

Mr. More gave Ellen hopes a speedy end would be put to the suit against her son; he had seen Serjeant Pennings and Mr. Procefs.

“Oh, for heaven’s sake,” said Ellen, “don’t name those gentlemen, I can hope for
no

no decision where they are concerned ; if you have no better comfort. —”

Mr. More laughed. “These gentlemen,” he answered, “will do your cause ample justice ; the Serjeant chuses to be a wit out of court, but he is a man of sense at the bar ; Mr. Procefs is a man of gallantry out of his office, but a very sound lawyer in it ; and you’ll find, they have lost no advantage it was possible to take : I foresee we shall very soon go in grand parade to put the heir in possession.”

Ellen, in maternal transport, threw herself into Mr. More’s arms and burst into tears—she knew he would not say so much if he had not reason to hope the best.

Evelyn measured the happy Mr. More with his eyes.

“Come, come,” said the good-humoured Counsellor, “I beg you will not be fond of me, remember, I am another’s property, my
madcap

madcap will be jealous ; when is your dinner to be served?"

Evelyn begged to have the honor of being known to Mr. More, and was then modestly taking his leave.

"My dear," said Lady Mappleton, "are you provided for so many? Mr. Evelyn and I expect to dine with you."

Lady Castle Howel politely bowed to both, and the grateful Evelyn was then re-seated next Lady Mappleton, and took the bottom of the table at dinner.

CHAP. IV.

MR. MEREDITH returned before they rose from table, "here is some mystery," said he, "that wretched man knows
nothing

nothing of the chest, it is with great difficulty he speaks, he denies it, and the servants all say, no such thing was brought there."

The moment dinner was over Evelyn disappeared.

Meredith informed them he had prayed by Morgan, on whom the composing medicines had failed to operate, he was in extreme torture, and the Physician was apprehensive of a fever. The messenger came for Meredith a second time, and having commissioned Gordon to go out on business for him, he obeyed the sick man's summons.

The ladies were again left alone, and Lady Castle Howel's prospect of her son's cause put her in such spirits, she proposed paying some visits, and calling on Lady Margaret Macsheat, which she had not done since her Lord's death.

Lady

Lady Mappleton agreed, but their astonishment is not to be expressed at finding the knocker muffled.

"What can be the matter?" said the Countess, "they were both at the auction, I heard, to-day."

"Yes," answered Lady Mappleton, and vastly delicate it was in them *to be* there. I hope cousin Margaret is not in the straw."

The door opened — to the servant's enquiry if Lady Margaret was at home, the footman stammered, in answer, that she was ill; the ladies were ordering their cards, but the servant again stammered, he supposed *they* might go in.

"Bless me," said Lady Mappleton, "what's the matter? no iron chest affair here, I hope."

"Yes it is, Madam," answered the man.

"Is

"Is what?" asked Lady Mappleton, following him to the Doctor's room.

He threw open a door and discovered Lord Viscount Claverton, Doctor Archibald Macfhean, and the Reverend Percival Evelyn, seated round a table, with several small and some large parcels of writings, tied together, two small account books, and some loose papers, which they were examining; near them stood a large open iron chest.

The moment Evelyn saw our heroine he ran to her, and taking her hand, "Ellen, my dearest Ellen," said he, "we have discovered your grandfather's house and estate is his own; your fortune too is recovered, your enemies defeated, and Oh!" added he passionately, "long may the Countess of Castle Howel enjoy and adorn her high rank, while her humble friends are praying, that the best of women may be the happiest."

"I

"I hope you are not mad, Sir," cried Lady Mappleton.

"These, at least," said Lord Claverton, "are not illusions," presenting a parcel, consisting of twenty bank notes, of a thousand pounds each, in an envelope, addressed to the Countess, in Lord Castle Howel's hand.

"And that, Madam," faltered Mr. Macfhean, "is not all; Lady Margaret has acted very culpably; it appears by these accounts, that she has not always paid the bills for which she gave vouchers, and that there remains a large balance now in her hands."

"Which," interrupted Lord Claverton, "I pledge myself to see paid."

"And here, Madam," said Evelyn, kneeling, "let me present to you the receipts for the mortgage of your honored grandfather's estate, and laying them on her lap, he hid his face, arose, and retired.

Ellen

Ellen had sat in silent wonder, indignation, and astonishment; but as if one sentiment animated hers, and her congenial heart, she now burst into tears and hysteric sobs; the Doctor gave her some drops, and when she was composed Lord Claverton took her hand,

“You must not withdraw it,” said he, “for here I resign the lover, and here I swear to be a true and disinterested friend; that, pointing to Evelyn, is a noble fellow, if any man deserves you from personal and mental merit it is him: Will you Madam,” added his Lordship, “accept me for your friend, not in the common acceptation of the term, but a bosom, a confidential friend?”

Ellen bowed gratefully.

“But you must speak, Madam,” continued his Lordship, “your voice is music to my ears and harmony to my soul.”

“Have

"Have a care, my Lord," said Lady Mapleton, "all that sounds much more like love than friendship."

"I have made my resolution, Madam," replied his Lordship.

"And I, my Lord," answered Ellen, gracefully courtesying, "accept it as an honor I am proud of."

If Doctor Macshead did not share his wife's guilt, it was plain he did her shame, for his pale cheeks and quivering lips were visible to the company.

Lord Claverton recommended it to Ellen to send for her lawyer, to take minutes and inventories, and in the mean while told them, by what means the important discovery was made.

Mr. Morgan's extreme eagerness to purchase the iron chest, very naturally alarmed
Lady

Lady Margaret, who had quite as many inducements to seek after any concealed papers of Lord Castle Howel's as Mr. Morgan could possibly have."

To explain these inducements it is necessary to retrace the regular and uniform line of conduct, that Lady had many years adopted. Her mother's fortune, twenty thousand pounds, had been, as usual, settled on the younger children, all of whom, five in number, lived to be of age, and received their respective shares, although her Ladyship was the only one now surviving. The small pittance of four thousand pounds to an Earl's daughter, brought up in the most expensive style, was such a trifle, added to a very plain person, as entirely precluded all hope of settlement by marriage equal to her rank, and, from the death of her father, she had resolved to remove this objection, as far as depended on fortune, but it was not 'till her brother's death she formed the resolution of absolutely sinking the money she had from time to time placed

placed in the funds, and lent out, merely for the sake of the interest, instead of paying the tradesmen.

The late Lord Castle Howel was supposed to be very careless and inattentive to money matters, and so he certainly was, as far as was consistent with his principle of honor; he saw that managing and paying bills was the hobby horse of his sister, and he knew, from the above state of her situation, she had many secret mortifications, which he allowed for in her temper, and endeavoured to alleviate, by the most brotherly affection and indulgence. What bills Lady Margaret did pay, she took care to have a handsome discount for, and for those she did not she was accountable, as she constantly signed a book, acknowledging the receipt of the different sums, and what bills they were to pay, his Lordship then gave her drafts, and in intire confidence of her integrity never troubled himself about her vouchers; all the bills being ordered to be carried to her, it was not possible she could
be

be detected, as, when they became troublesome, she immediately paid.

On the death of her brother, as she had a duplicate to his writing table key, she got possession of all the others, and having in vain searched every part of his library and private drawers for the book he kept against her, and finding it was not at his banker's, nor with him in the country, she at once proposed to enlarge her already genteel fortune, by leaving the tradesmen's accounts open, and appropriating to her own use upwards of nine thousand pounds, she had of her brother's, in the funds, and other securities.

Mr. Morgan went express to London the instant he heard of Lord Castle Howel's death; the last thousand pounds paid him was in the Earl's absence, and the deeds being not yet assigned, he hoped, his eye still on Code Gwyn, he might, on re-payment of the money, yet have a chance to seize an estate that most provokingly lay between

him and all his other purchases; he had already the lands all round, to the amount of twelve thousand pound a year, but this house fronted Code Gwyn vale, whose present owner he despised, and for whose heir he felt both revenge and hatred; well as he loved money he would rather give double the value than not have it, what an acquisition would it then be to get it at half.

These were Morgan's inducements to pay Lady Margaret a visit of condolence; but if the reader has at all entered into his character, they will form some idea of his feelings when he understood she was ignorant of a secret of which he was master; and by which means he had it in his power to defraud Lord Castle Howel's heir of the whole sum his Lordship had paid on account of his mortgage on the Code Gwyn estate.

The late Earl, besides his botanical taste, had something of a mechanical genius, and had an iron repository for his papers, made

OR

on a very peculiar construction, of his own invention, which so pleased him, that, Morgan happening to attend his appointment the day it was brought home, he shewed and explained it to him.

It had a false bottom, which, by indenting a part in the visible one, forced up a small square, and shewed the lock, and at the same instant, by the same spring, the lid was let down, unless fastened back by a small bolt, made on the inside for that purpose :—" And here," said the Earl, " am I hoarding a dower for my Ellen, from the sale of my timber, and here, Master Morgan, will I deposit for her your mortgage ; in that book I keep my sister's account, and in that my own."

Morgan could scarce respire ; all these were now as good as in his own possession ; he saw it was not Lady Margaret's interest, or intention to make discoveries, and reveal them : The coach-maker came in with a long bill, and was answered by Lady Margaret with as

long a face, that her brother's affairs were in the utmost disorder.

Now it had so happened, this very bill, which was for the new carriages and harness for the year, and for the wedding, had actually been presented, in the presence of Morgan, by her Ladyship, to her brother, who had instantly given a draft for payment, at least so Mr. Morgan *believed*, but *his memory* was *very bad*, he *might* be *mistaken*. Lady Margaret did not often colour, she turned pale, but a few sentences settled a right understanding between the parties; and Lady Margaret having also a *bad memory*, no wonder, *she forgot* the thousand pounds paid on her brother's account to Mr. Morgan.

Morgan remained perdue in town, to seize his prey; and Lady Margaret being too guilty to be free from suspicion, took the alarm, when she saw with what eagerness he bid for the chest; she then recollected how particular the Earl had been, about the making it, and
resolved

resolved not to lose sight of Morgan or the chest, 'till she was satisfied ; not that she suspected the treasure it contained, but as she knew, if her accounts got into Morgan's hands, he would not fail to make her pay very dear for them. His accident put it in her power to get possession of it herself, by the help of her spouse, to whom she imparted, if not her *guilt*, her *suspensions*; he, for reasons he had not assigned, hastened to Lord Claverton's, and sent the chairmen, both his countrymen, for the chest, in Mr. Morgan's name, and in the confusion, though a cart was still waiting at the door to take it away, as it had been paid for when knocked down, it was delivered to them.

The moment Evelyn heard the chest was not at Morgan's, nor at Grosvenor-Street, he hastened, more and more convinced of its importance, to Bow-Street, and having promised a handsome reward, was, by the ingenious retainers of the public office, conducted to Lord Claverton's, where the chairmen

pointed out, as the persons who conveyed the chest from the auction.

The men had been well paid, and as they supposed, the business being transacted by their Lord's particular friend ; had his sanction, would render no account either to Evelyn or the officers of justice.——

Evelyn who suspected Lord Claverton's designs on Ellen,—concluded he had some end to answer by getting the chest into his possession ; perhaps to claim a merit, he was resolved no rival should have, of putting her in possession of her right,—he insisted on seeing his Lordship, who tho' not risen from table, immediately admitted him.——

Lord Claverton's surprise, when Evelyn, with well mannered firmness, demanded the chest, was too natural to be assumed ; he rung for the chairmen, who at his command gave up their employer, and the place where they deposited their ponderous burthen.—

Lord

Lord Claverton sent for a hack, and ordered his servant to give a single knock at Doctor Macsheat's door; as soon as it opened, he rushed in, and led the way to the Doctor's private apartment, where they found Lady Margaret and her *cara sposo*, on their knees, with a wax taper, exploring the inside of the iron chest, impatient to discover, what they had never the less sent for the maker to do for them.

Lady Margaret was seized with convulsions, the moment she saw the unwelcome visitors, and while the Doctor attended her, — by the help of the maker, who now arrived, the lid being by him bolted up, they saw the important lock, and the Doctor, with affected readiness, produced a key which opened the repository of so much treasure and information.

Mr. More, Mr. Traverse, Mr. Process and Serjeant Penning now arrived, the latter so transformed, it was not till he had made

some half dozen speeches, Ellen could believe it was him; his hair, of which he had no small quantity, being all cramed under a tye wig, of immoderate size, which was drawn in front so near his brows, as to cock up and expose part of the great bundle of hair behind; he had a black gown, a band, a pair of stiff top'd gloves with open fingers; and looked so unlike the Serjeant Penning she saw at Natly, that when she did find out it was the same, important as the business was, she could not help laughing.

“Very well, my Lady, vastly well,” said the serjeant, “they *may* laugh that win, we always allow that in our courts.”

Mr. Procefs, who with Mr. Traverse, was taking inventories and minutes, laid them down, to wish a certain pretty widow of his acquaintance could find a false bottom to her husband's iron chest, he would marry her to-morrow. —

Tra-

Traverse, took off his spectacles, and laid down his minutes, to hear what matter of mighty import his brother in the profession had to say ; but resumed both his pen and glasses with a contemptuous *paoh* !—*paoh* ! widows and false bottoms,—Mr. More declared himself too happy to attend to business.—

Lady Mappleton invited the whole party, to eat cold meat with her, and they accepted the invitation, all but Dr. Macsheat, whose pale cheeks and unsteady limbs, witnessed an inward perturbation, but whether on the account of the refund, or his Lady's fits, we will not presume to determine.

They found Duke Dash and his son, with Caroline, waiting to see Lady Mappleton.

Lord Claverton, on the credit of the newly entered into compact, between him and Ellen, assumed a right to hand her out of her carriage, placed his seat next her's, and engrossed to himself all the polite attentions

of so much importance to fine women from fine men.—

Duke Dash looked grave, and Lord Squandervelt watched Ellen's eyes, which were oftener fixed on Lord Claverton than any one else, and never on him, till he swore to Caroline she looked quite ugly; nay, he believed she absolutely squinted.

Lord Squandervelt felt the indignity offered him; *him*! who was the dear fellow of one Lady, the faucy one of another, and the agreeable impertinent of a third; who was well made, six feet two high, had bright eyes, fine teeth, a roman nose, and whether he wore his hair crop'd or straight, out or in powder, was followed by the men, and admired by the women; and who, moreover, was but just turned of thirty; *him*, to be neglected for a man at least a dozen years older; with jaundice eyes, parchment skin, and no calves to his legs, by a dowerless widow, without family or fortune; the thing was actually incredible;

credible ! but such an insult merited, and should have, the severest punishment; she should be sensible of what she lost, and he actually flirted with Caroline before her face.

“ If the first match in England should pass me to my dear cousin,” whispered Ellen to Lady Mappleton, “ how I should grieve !”

Caroline Holt was a fine figure ; her features were not regularly beautiful, her face however had that kind of harmony and take in it, which when it has once pleased, will not cease to do so ; and is perhaps a more lasting attraction than beauty : Lord Squandervelt found his attentions received, with their usual flattering effect ; he thought Caroline infinitely agreeable, and wondered he had not found it out before.

The Duke’s object was to have his son married, and if to a woman of family, fortune was not the object.—

Ellen now was so pleased with the Marquis, she more than once officiously addressed him,—“yes,” thought he, flushed with inherent vanity, “she feels it, but her presumption shall be punished,” and he became more attentive to Caroline!

At two the party separated, Lord Claverton insisted he had a right to set his *friend* down, and as he offered Mr. More the same civility, who was her neighbour, Ellen did not object.

CHAP. V.

THE next morning was employed in writing to Natly and Code Gwyn; to the latter sheet after sheet was filled, and still there was matter, just as she was sealing the last, in came Gordon, leading his Nancy.

“Ay,”

“Ay,” said he, “you may well be surprised, but she will tell you news that will more surprise you: The old girl is married to an Irish giant, who wont let her throw away her money on law suits for her relations; little Jane is run a way to Lady Gertrude, who is called on for half her sister’s fortune; and God knows what we shall do with the cursed Howels of Moor-bank.”——

“Really, Mr. Gordon,” said Lady Castle Howel, “you are a most agreeable creature, to come upon one with such a flow of good news at once; I am however gald to see Mrs. Gordon, and if I did not think she had given you as much of the sort, as you can bear, I have news to tell you.”

Gordon turned pale, “why,” answered he, “except Lady Gertrude has taken it into her head, to fall in love with Parson Runnington, whose wife broke a blood vessel last week, in which case we are all handsomely done for; I can’t see how we can be worse off.”——

“Ah,”

“ Ah,” replied Ellen, with affected gravity “ you have more of the infidel than the christian about you ; there, read and tremble ;” and she laid on the table the envelope with the bank notes.

Mr. Gordon removed his wig, replaced it, wiped his face ; the world was so full of wickedness, and seemed so determined to league against honesty, he protested he was afraid to look at the paper.

Mrs. Gordon hoped things were not so very bad ; tho’ she was sure Sir James Sebley, who in her opinion was very ugly, tho’ Lady Frances liked him, because he was tall,—would never let her do any thing for the young Lord.—

“ Lady Frances ! an old—do Nancy describe the wedding, what do you think of Nancy for a bride-maid ?” Gordon’s courage so entirely failed, he would talk of any thing rather than look at the papers on the table.

“ Be

“Be so good,” said Ellen, pointing to the envelope.—

He removed his wig, again, changed his seat, resumed the old one, complained of heat, at last “I shall never have another happy day I firmly believe,” and he took a resolution to see the worst; “what in the name of God is all this,” said he staring at the notes and the late Earl’s direction.

“The lining of the iron chest, my dear Gordon,” answered Ellen, extending her hand to him, and embracing his wife.

Off went the wig, and exposed his short thick red bristles, while he exhibited one of the best scotch reels, to his own voice, ever danced; Nancy at first joined in the tune, then beat time, and at last kicked the chairs out of their place, and capered about with her husband till the house shook.

In the midst of a scene, at which Ellen
stood

stood laughing, Lord Claverton entered, he was on the point of retreating, at a sight so novel and outre, but seeing Ellen, ventured in.

Mrs. Gordon had danced her hat off, and her cap on one side, and Gordon who took a great deal of snuff, and never, in any excess of joy or grief, forgot his nose, having in his violent exercise dispensed the contents of his mull to every part of his face, the good couple cut as grotesque figures as his Lordship had ever seen.

Ellen was explaining, with infinite spirit and good humour, the cause of their extravagant joy, when she observed Lord Claverton's eyes fixed, and saw him change countenance; she looked round, and beheld Mrs. Gordon stop short in the act of setting her cap even, and staring at him; as however he turned to the window without speaking, Mrs. Gordon adjusted her head in silence also; Gordon's

don's former knowledge of his Lordship was an explanation of this embarrassment, and gave rise to some conjectures not altogether to his advantage.

Gordon, who remembered nothing in his own conduct to check his honest joy, continued a thousand extravagances; his wife, from the same motive, recovered her surprise; and Ellen, who now had a fore taste of liberty and independance, was pleased, because they were happy; but Lord Claverton's brow drop'd over his hollow eyes; he stood with his arms folded, looking at the window, seeming however not to see any thing.

A noise now was heard, which tho' a few months back it daily saluted the ears of the Countess, was lately become very unusual.

Winifred grown too fine a lady to scold, and too genteel to cry, had nearly got rid of old habits, Mademoiselle thought them so common! and vulgar! she was now however as
it

it seemed, in the very last distress, and whined in the loudest key.—

“What is the matter with my uncle and Winifred?” said the Countess, distinguishing his voice.—

“I insist on knowing where it is; I will keep you in a prison as long as you live, if it is not restored.”

“The Lort be coot to me, pray Cot,” cried Winifred, rushing into the room in tears, followed by the mild, the peaceable Meredith, in an actual passion!---

“What is the matter?” cried all, but Lord Claverton, who was still in his reverie.

“Lort help me,” sob’d Winifred, “I gave it to Mr. Joseph; I tell you if you cill me I can say no more.”

“And was not you ordered to get it from him?” replied Meredith.

“Why

“Why he—he lent it to a young lady of his acquaintance, and she—she lent it to a person of her acquaintance, as lives at the sign of the three cowden balls, and he is come to see for it.”

“Ah, thou wretch! ungrateful! perfidious!” said Meredith, stamping with anger.

“What is the matter?” said Ellen, “what has she done?”

Down drop’d Winifred on her knees, “pray your reverent have mercy on your poor old servant, don’t tell my Lady, I am sure I should not hurt a hair of her head, nor Mr. Evelyn’s, for all he is so cross to me, put it all about Lord Claverton, because I said as how a Lady, that is a Lady, ought to marry a Lord, and not a poor boy that no-body owns, and so.”——

Lord Claverton now slightly attended.

“And

“ And so now he picks a quarrel, about a foolish locket, as Mr. Joseph, poor tear, says it is not worth a kinney, and offered to pay for it hover and hover.”

“ This creature will make me mad ; I tell you it is of the last importance,” and Meredith really looked terrible.

“ Oh Lort of his cootness safe me, pray Cot,” cried Winifred, sideling up to Ellen, “ certainly satan as put his cloven foot on our reverent.”

“ Ellen could not comprehend it, Gordon could,—and therefore told Winifred, he would go *with* her to Joseph, for the locket must be found.—

Winifred hoped Mister Cordon would call a coach, for no chenteele people falked.

“ ’Twas a very fine morning,” Mrs. Gordon said.

“ Yes,

“Yes, Mistress Cordon, it may to fery well for a couple of the kennel, for as Mr. Joseph says”—

Mr. Meredith's *be gone* put what Mr. Joseph said, out of her head, and she left the room with Gordon.

Meredith apologized to Lord Claverton and the Countess, by a brief relation of his Elève's history, with which the reader is already acquainted,—and informed them that Morgan awakened to the feelings of nature, was anxious to leave all *his* fortune to Evelyn; “as the world had done me so much credit,” he added, “as to give the young man to *me*, I wish to prove how little I am entitled to the honor, as I really esteem it, of being father to Percival Evelyn; I have found his honest nurse and her husband,—but they have forgot my face as well as his, and as I did not give them my name, they can only identify him by the locket, this creature gave to her Mr. Joseph!”

Ellen's

Ellen's infant years had passed in the exchange of kindneſſes with Evelyn, without thinking of inquiring about his parents ; as love began to uſurp his ſway in her young heart, Evelyn's *ſelf* ſtill more engroſſed her ; but ſince her acquaintance with the world ; and ſince ſhe had by accident heard the report of the country, her own obſervation on her uncle's extreme fondneſs, and Evelyn's implicit duty, had partially confirmed theſe reports, and it was perhaps no ſmall advantage to him, in her opinion, who had *ſome* of her family pride, that he was *their* relation.

The hiſtory related by Mr. Meredith opened a new ſource of ideas,—Evelyn would be the rich heir of one of the moſt wealthy private men in Britain ; but this acquisition, far from rendering him more worthy to ſucceed her late Lord, fixed a ſtigma on his birth, that all her love for him could not reconcile.

Lord Claverton ſeemed to hear, and not
to

to hear Evelyn's story ; he was attentive for one minute, and absent five.

When Meredith concluded, Ellen became as absent as Lord Claverton, and a message from Morgan who could not bear to be a moment alone, by taking away her uncle, left a dumb trio, who seemed little disposed to be entertained, and less to entertain.

Lady Mappleton and Caroline Holt dropped in, in high spirits and good humour ; Lord Squandervelt had aired by their carriage, and excited the attention of the whole ring ; they were pleased, and so was Ellen.

Gordon returned with Winifred, without the locket of which Joseph had gone in search.

Mr. Evelyn called to take leave, said he was going to Code Gwyn immediately, he had been indisposed, and had not seen any of his friends that morning.

“ My

"My God! sir," said Lady Mappleton having been told by Ellen his relation to Morgan, "would you leave your grandfather in the moment he is making you his heir?"

Evelyn started.

Ellen smiled, and told him she would now be as happy a harbinger to him, as he last night was to her; tho' without the pleasure of having like him, been an instrument in bringing about the good fortune.

Gordon said he would save her some repetitions, and gave him Meredith's papers, which, when he had read, left only to be told, that Morgan's heart was touched, and that he was probably at that moment making a will in his favor.

"And this," said Evelyn, with a melancholy and reproachful look to Ellen, "is your good news; I am found to be the spurious issue of a man, who is hateful to *you* and all
yours,

yours, I am not only disgraced in my existence but in the source of it. Ah, Madam, fate had done its worst before."

From the moment Evelyn entered, Lord Claverton had been attentive; he saw the dispondency of his look, and considered the discovery just made exactly as he did, rather a misfortune than an acquisition, for Morgan's character was as odious as public; and his Lordship's dislike of Evelyn, having vanished, with his hope of obtaining Ellen, the exact contrary tendency led him to desire to see two people who seemed born for each other, united; he took hold of Evelyn's arm, and drew him to the window, where in the middle of a very friendly harangue, Evelyn earnestly and seriously looking him in the face, Lord Claverton stopped and clapped his hand to his forehead.

Mrs. Gordon, who stood at a little distance, come hastily to them, and laying her hand on Lord Claverton's arm, looked at him and at

K

Evelyn,

Evelyn; my Lord turned hastily to the window, and Mrs. Gordon to her seat.

Lady Mappleton, Ellen and Caroline formed a little group, half angry and half laughing at Winifred's distress, who stood crying behind her Mistress's chair; when a servant entered with Joseph's humble duty to his lord, and beg'd to speak with him.

"This locket I see is not to be found," said Gordon, "Joseph wants Lord Claverton's interference in his favor."

Lord Claverton a little ashamed of a manoeuvre of his servant's, which he was conscious had his sanction, was rather embarrassed; he did not chuse however to appear as a party in so vexatious a business in its present state, much less did he wish any thing should transpire, that could lead to his concern in it originally.

The servant waiting for an answer; Ellen begged Lord Claverton, would have Joseph
in,

in, "that we may hear," continued she, "the history of this famous locket," and his Lordship still hesitating, Joseph entered, followed by an elderly woman.

Winifred was in her way, no less ashamed of the part she had acted, than his Lordship, and fearful of the consequences not only to herself, but poor tear Mr. Joseph, as she had received the locket of Mr. Evelyn under solemn promise of persuading Ellen to wear it for his sake, but had been coaxed out of it by Joseph, who told her it would be much more to *her* interest, and *his*, if her mistress never thought of Evelyn or his locket she set up a loud lamentation as soon as she saw him.

"My Lord," stammered Joseph, "the locket I received from—Mrs. Winifred gave."

"I give," interrupted Winifred in a fright.

"That I--I took."—

"Took! what, did you steal it?" said Gordon.

"Steal! Mister Cordon; I dare say Mr. Joseph scorns your words," answered Winifred, spitefully.

"Well, well said Lord Claverton impatiently "whether it was given to you, or you took it is not the present question, all you have to do is to produce it."

"My Lord, I beg leave to differ with you," joined Evelyn, "the locket was mine, I gave it that woman in special confidence to"—

"To give," interrupted Lord Claverton, with affected ease, "to the woman *you* loved, and she gave it to the man *she* loved, let us get to the point, is it forth coming?"

"My Lord!" stammered Joseph again, "I--I happened to give, to desire a--a young woman

woman of my acquaintance to--to keep the locket for me, and she being a little distressed, borrowed a little money on it of this gentlewoman, who refuses to deliver it to any body but your Lordship."

"Me!" answered Lord Claverton, still fore with former remembrances, what can I have to do with it?"

The elderly woman advanced and courtesying, produced a bundle of papers, out of which she took the locket, and said, if that was Lord Claverton she had some private business with him.

Gordon however willing to get possession, begged to look at it in the mean time.

The woman, with some reluctance gave it into his hands, and followed Lord Claverton, who did not motion to leave the room, to the further end of it.

"Winifred," said Lady Mappleton, "it is well for you the lost sheep is found, you and

your lover would have certainly finished your amour in a prison."

"Then I am sure my Laty our reverent, must have gone to satan with the plessing of Cot, for his ardartness and cristian cruelty, for why, Cot pe coot unto us, if a thing is lost it is lost, sarvant can put pay, Cot is apove the tivel still, and as to the ugly locket."—

"Pray let me see it, such as it is," cried Ellen.

"Mister Cordon, let my Laty see the tivilish locket."

As Gordon was leisurely handing it across to Ellen, his wife snatched it out of his hand.

"Fery well inteed Mistress Cordon," cried Winifred, that is your manners now I warrant; fell, fell, ashes to ashes, and tirt to tirt, say I, I suppose you have Cot your ould stories

stories and pribbles and prabbles and jealousies, but I tell you fat."

A loud shriek from Mrs. Gordon stopped Winifred, and alarmed the company, "my Lord! Lord Claverton!" said she, in a voice that echoed thro' the house.

Lord Claverton, to whom the stranger was just beginning to open her business, was, interrupted by this loud call on his name, and advancing towards Mrs. Gordon, saw the locket in her hand, held at arms length, which she had opened at the back, and displayed his own picture to his view, such as it was 24 years before.

Lord Claverton staggered back, his sight failed him and he fell almost fainting into the arms of Evelyn, who fortunately stood near enough to receive him.

"And was this locket yours, sir?" said Mrs. Gordon, exceedingly agitated, "was it your mother from whom you received it? Oh my

“dear friend ! my sweet Betsey Martin ! what have you done with her my Lord ? what have you done with your wife ?”

“ His wife !” cried Lady Mappleton.

Ellen had heard from Gordon of Lord Claverton’s early marriage, and concluded it had been defolved by death ; had she found herself inclined to listen to his offers, it is probable, mere conjecture would not have satisfied her ; but totally indifferent, whether there existed a being who had, or had not a legal, or other claim on him, were matters that never occupied a single thought of her’s.

“ Yes,” continued Mrs. Gordon, crying violently, “ you know my Lord she was your wedded lawful wife, and Gordon knows it too, as much and as legally as I am his.

“ With us small folks,” answered Gordon, “ marriage is a thing, so little liable to be forgotten, that I have been astonished, and so I told the Countess, how it could slip his Lordship’s memory,

memory, which it must certainly have done or he would have recollected me."

"Not perhaps," replied Ellen, smiling, "as you had cut off your red hair, wore a brown wig and had the small pox."

"Hoot that's perfectly nonsense," answered Gordon, "compared to the change from a fine handsome Captain in the guards, to a sickly Viscount, and yet you see I knew him directly."

Lord Claverton recovering, looked earnestly at Evelyn, "I dare not trust myself with my own ideas, are you sure, sir, that locket was your mother's?"

"Ah! no, my Lord," answered Evelyn, humbled by a question which recurred to his degrading original, "*my* mother was *not* a wife, nor was her name Martin, this must be some mistake."—

"True," replied Lord Claverton, "I did not think of that, but however it came into

your hands, this locket certainly did belong, to a young woman, to whom I was married before I first left England, and whom I heard from an old servant, Joe's father, died, with her infant in child-bed,—the fellow could have no interest in deceiving me, yet from a circumstance that struck me, and I saw it had the same effect on my old acquaintance Mrs. Gordon."

"Oh!" interrupted Mrs. Gordon, "he looked exactly like her as he was speaking to you at the window; but is she indeed dead my Lord? were you not ashamed of your first choice, when you became a Lord, and so have hid her some where? for God's sake tell me."

"I can tell you no more than I have already done; I received certain intelligence from the servant who used to carry my letters to her, she was dead; the fellow's son is now my servant, and he himself would have attended me to the West Indies, had he not met with a widow woman who—"

"I my Lord," said the elderly woman, "am that widow,—I was imprudent enough to love Jack Wilks so well, as to bye his discharge,—and ruin myself and a family of children, by doing so : I saw your Lady safely delivered of a son, and put him myself to a nurse in my neighbourhood; the poor young creature was in a deep decline, she told me her heart was broken."

"Oh! my Lord," said the Countess in a reproachful accent.

"She was the sweetest girl," joined Mrs. Gordon.

"Poor Betsy," said Lord Claverton, in a very low voice.

Lady Mappleton beg'd the stranger would proceed.

Evelyn, who found he had a heart, too big for his bosom, too proud for his birth, and

too accessible to sympathy for his peace, by degrees reached the Countess, and resting his forehead on his hand, at the back of her chair, gave way to emotions for which he could not immediately account, and which he found it impossible to restrain.

"Yes," continued the stranger, "the last words she spoke to me were, "my heart is broke;" my own was at that time little better, my husband was spending my substance on bad women, and profligate companions, God help me! I did not know which way to turn; my creditors were pressing, Jack minded nothing, I dreaded every day he would be arrested, Madam grew worse and worse, the Doctors advised her to change the air; a pretty girl, a niece of my own attended her, and my husband under pretence of escaping the bailiffs, and that his Captain would expect to hear from him about his Lady, went with her to Highgate."

"To Highgate!" said Ellen, her soul in her eyes, "to Highgate, did you say?"

"Pray

“ Pray proceed,” said Lord Claverton, not attending to Ellen’s eager question.

“ There,” continued the woman, “ the Lady died; and there my faithless husband, and abandoned niece, rob’d her of every article of value they could carry off: I was so fearful of his being arrested, that I did not dare to send any body to enquire after him, when he missed coming home, as usual on the Sunday, but as I could not be easy I walked there, and knowing the poor Lady had many valuables with her, concluded, after such a wicked robbery, I should hear no more of him.”

“ Oh! the cootness of cootness, fat a son of darkness, and witchcraft, and fornication, and idolatory fas poor tear Mr. Joseph’s father. Oh! if I had sarved my poor tear Laty so, and her sweet tear papy, I could not sleep in my ped for fear of fatan; Lort preserve his poor sarvants and forgive their iniquities, amen, amen, pray Cot.”

This

This half reproach, and half prayer of Winifred's, was too much for Joseph's modesty,—he moved in a retrograde motion towards the door.

“Wait, sir,” said Lord Claverton.—

The stranger went on.

“I returned home heavy enough, God knows; I had five children, and had reason to be sure, the instant it was known my husband was gone, my goods would be seized, so I thought I would keep my poor little ones a-bed to lye on, out of what their honest father worked for, and by help of my friends moved away in the night.”

“What became of my child?” asked Lord Claverton, “and how came this trinket to escape the vile plunderers?”

“My Lord, the child, the finest little fellow, methinks I see him now;”—by accident

dent the woman's eyes were fixed opposite where Evelyn sat, and near where Winifred stood.

"Cot of his cootness and marcy forbid," cried the latter, giving a spring to a distance, "because to be sure it must be a cost or an apparition, for there's nothing there put Mr. Percival Evelyn, crying like a papy, and to be sure poor tear, he has cause, for if he is ever so rich, he can pe nothing put a pastard, as Mr. Joseph says.

"Leave the room," said the Countess, her face and neck in a glow.

"Tear my Laty, let me hear the old gentle-woman's story, I am sure——"

"This instant go;" and Ellen's fine form shook with anger.

Evelyn arose in a sudden start of resentment, but his mind was in a state of mortification;

cation; why should I be angry thought he at a truth, which if not spoke *to* will be sure to be spoke *of* me."

Winifred had neither sense, or delicacy, enough to be conscious of any fault, in what she had said, and protested, when she got out of the room, that witch Mistress Cordon, was always making mischief.

Lord Clayerton rose himself, and flung the door after Winifred, "you were speaking of my child," said he.

"I can only say, my Lord, he was a lovely boy, but as to the locket——"

"Ay now," said Lady Mappleton, eagerly.

Ellen *did not, could not* speak, but she looked.

"I knew it, the minute I saw it," said Mrs. Gordon, "I remember your giving it
Mrs.

Mrs. Claverton, dear creature ! she always wore it round her neck ; Mr. Gordon, you—
“ bless me, where is Mr. Gordon ? ” he had slip’d out unobserved.—

“ My husband, my Lord,” continued the stranger.

“ Prithee woman,” interrupted Lord Claverton, “ no more of thy husband, the villain wrote me word, my wife and child were dead, doubtless fearing he should be detected ; but if he is above ground---”

“ That my Lord,” resumed the woman,
“ he is not ; I have little more to say, but it is all about him : My first husband’s brother was a pawnbroker ; a year after Jack Wilks left me he pitied the children, and took us all to his house, and when he died, left the business to my son and me ; soon after his death Wilks came like a beggar, in a dying state to my
door ;

door; poor fellow! he was very handsome when I bought him out of the guards, and I could not help pitying him;--I took him in, but my son was angry, so I thought as I had plenty, thank God, to live on, and my children provided for, I'd e'en give up the trade and take poor Jack into the country; my son agreed to pay my share of the property, and as we were taking stock, my husband, who was then very ill, poor man! sitting by, saw this locket, which had been pledged by a girl of the town, a year before; he took it up and opened the back by a spring we had not seen, and there was your Lordship's picture: Poor Jack, fainted away, and never held up his head after—I wanted him to ease his conscience, and confess all his sins.

“Oh! God!” cried Lord Claverton, “he certainly destroyed my child.” The ladies shuddered, Mrs. Gordon wept; the woman continued,

“But

“ But he would not, he said, for he knew he should be hanged ; all he begged with his dying breath, was, that whoever came for the locket might be stopped, and obliged to account to you, how it was come by, and he desired if it was not redeemed within the time I would carry it to your Lordship, with these papers, which he had found among the poor lady’s cloaths.

Lord Claverton trembled so violently he tore the first letter in two ; it was a letter of his own, on the corner of which, and on a few more of the same signature, she had left the impresson of a death’s head in black wax:

“ Oh !” sighed he, “ more eloquent than speech.”

These and some letters from Mrs. Gordon made the first parcel, except two papers which had dropped from the rest ; one was a letter
begun

begun to Captain Claverton, near the time of her labour; the other also begun to Mrs. Gordon, a few days before her death; these half finished posthumous addressees, were too affecting to be audibly read—that to the husband struck a dagger to his heart—that to the friend, left a remembrance of the writer sweetly painful. Lord Claverton handed his to Lady Mappleton, over whose shoulder both Ellen and Evelyn read it, while he gave way to a gush of sorrow and self reproach.

THE LETTER.

“I address you, my once loved Claverton,
“perhaps for the last time; my miseries are
“drawing to a close: My child, the legal
“offspring of wedded love, deserted by an
“unfeeling father, may have nothing of pa-
“rental relics, when it sees the light, but

“ 2

“ a breathless mother — Oh ! Claverton,
“ let me speak to your soul : If my infant
“ lives, it is, from its birth, heir to great
“ wealth—alas ! and so is its unhappy mo-
“ ther, yet she is now wretched, deserted, and
“ poor. If I could have born the journey,
“ my intent was to go to Gordon’s, who are
“ the only witnesses, besides Jack, that I am
“ not the victim of shame as well as folly, but
“ I could not ; and, abandoned by you, it
“ would have been equally difficult for me to
“ prove my marriage, or reconcile my papa
“ to it ; his severity is dreadful, I could not
“ bear it—your man pretends he is ignorant
“ of your station, and I am really so ; how to
“ en ——”

The ladies wept.

“ Amiable unfortunate !” said Evelyn.

Mrs. Gordon would read her fragment her-
self, and Lord Claverton, as well as the rest,
drew

drew near her, as her voice was rendered nearly inarticulate by her feelings — almost blinded with tears she read,——

“The longings of my soul have been to find a home with my dear Nancy and her Billy, but it will not be.”

“Oh! Nancy, 'tis but a span since we lived together in peace and amity, health and innocence spread a bloom in our countenance, but ‘the cruel spoiler came!’ Were you to see me *now!*——”

“A good man talked to me of love, alas! he little thought the worm of corruption had already began to gnaw my vitals, and that the form he admired was fading into dust!”

“I have wrote to you, my Nancy, but you have not received my letters, if you had, your poor Betfy’s eyes would not be closed

“by strangers, they shut in darkness, but will
“open in everlasting light.”

“I hope I shall have strength to finish this
“letter.”

“I have a son, Nancy, your Willy must
“take him if my papa will not; I am not *sure*,
“but believe, from the hour of my death,
“he has a certain fortune—if his fath —”

“Barbarous father!” exclaimed Lord Claverton, “I see, ladies, your indignation; I ought, indeed to be an outcast, but this I beg to say; culpable, cruel as I was, in the first instance, in leaving my wife, she *was* my *lawful wife*, had not that villain imposed on me, I should have enquired strictly after her and the child; and what, perhaps, a may little extenuate my conduct, I did not, upon my honor, know, she was pregnant when I left her. I was very wild and dissipated, and got into some scrapes, which, if my relations had not
assisted

assisted me to avoid, I should have found very troublesome, I knew if I told her I was going abroad, she would wish to accompany me; it was a wild boyish attachment, and not proof against the inconvenience to which she, who had nothing but her watch, and a few jewels, would expose me; and the governess, afraid I believe of her own character, assured me I had nothing to hope from her father, who was a city miser. I had no intention to deny or evade the marriage, but when I heard it was dissolved by death, I thought it could answer no purpose to make it public: I did not recollect Gordon, notwithstanding his name, but I knew Nancy the moment I saw her, and should have taken an opportunity to renew my acquaintance, though not, perhaps, in the presence of *all* this company."

Lady Mappleton acknowledged, though the story was in many parts a pitiable one, yet, that Lord Claverton, considering his youth at the time, was not so very blameable, as, she confessed, she at first thought him. That
To

with respect to the locket, as it appeared to her to be most probable the child actually did die, as well as the mother, though to conceal his theft, the man had mistated the time; it might have been sold, and so come into the possession of Miss Morgan.

Evelyn's eyes were involuntarily averted at hearing his mother, called Miss: A small parcel of papers had dropped at Lord Claverton's feet, which Evelyn saw, and from a natural impulse of politeness stooped for it.

On presenting it to Lord Claverton, he saw the hand writing—he started—all his blood rushed into his face; again and again he looked at the writing, at Lord Claverton, at Ellen.

“What have you got there?” said the tremulous voice of one, whose attention was riveted to every motion of Percival Evelyn.

“Good God! what is this?” said he to the woman, “did *you* bring those papers?”

She answered in the affirmative.

"And did your husband get them from Lord Claverton's wife?"

"From *Captain* Claverton's wife, so he said on his death bed."

"What is it, Percival? Why do you tremble so? How nervous you are!" said Ellen, in a soothing accent.

"Tremble indeed," replied he, "if ever I saw Mr. Meredith's hand, it is in the address of those letters to Miss Elizabeth Morgan."

"How! What is that?" cried Lord Claverton.

The fact was exactly so: There were several letters and pieces of poetry, from the pen of Mr. Meredith; and in that moment the writer and Gordon entered.

Many

Many artists have exercised their genius, and exerted their skill, to paint a good man in the hour of tribulation, of danger, and of death ; but the triumph of art would be to trace from the countenance of Mr. Meredith the fervent gratitude of a devout christian—the gratified zeal of sincere friendship—the corrected joy of parental solicitude—and the modest triumph of benevolence—that so we might see portrayed the countenance of a good man in the hour of prosperity.

“Lord Claverton,” said the good divine, “you have heard of your wife’s death, ‘of the early blast, that destroyed the loveliest flower of modest nature!’ and I will not doubt your regret ; but are you disposed, my Lord, to receive her child ? To pay *him* the debt of gratitude, and of tenderness, due to his beatified mother ?”

“Oh ! Mr. Meredith, can you, can you doubt it ? Tell me where he is, my only
L 2 child

child is an orphan, while his father's riches accumulate, while ——”

“No, my Lord,” interrupted Meredith, tears stealing down his cheeks, “he has not been an orphan, he had a friend who felt that dearer affection for him than riches can purchase, or power command; son of my care and of my love, dearest Percival, once more let me embrace thee, before the name *I* gave thee, when denied to *share* the smallest part of that immense wealth that may in a few hours be wholly thine, be resigned; before you, my Lord, bestow your blessing—which if not bestowed in thankful rapture, you will not deserve to bless my mental son, Percival Evelyn, your Horatio Claverton.

“Oh! that was his name, sure enough,” cried the woman. “Please your Lordship I was his godmother, and now I look at him, I remember his eyes to this hour; Oh! he was a fine creature!”

The

The embrace of Mr. Meredith and his élève left the former unable to speak, and Lord Claverton's surprise was only exceeded by his pleasure. Evelyn gracefully bent his knee, and the honest woman who nursed him was introduced, she immediately knew Mrs. Wilks, who also recognised her, and the change of name, from Martin to Morgan, like all other mysteries, when explained, became no mystery at all. Every body wondered they could be so stupid as not to find it out, except Gordon, who declared he had found it out the instant the old Lady mentioned Highgate air; nay, he found it in his feelings the first hour he saw Evelyn.

Lady Mappleton thought of Ellen's promise, not to marry the *curate*, and Caroline kiss'd her hand, as cold, and her cheek as pale, as if the grizzle glutton had already seized on the most charming morsel in creation; but they were suddenly animated with the deepest glow, when Lord Claverton begged to introduce to her *his son, Horatio Claverton*. Evelyn again knelt, he took the hand at liberty,

pressed it to his lips, to his heart, "*Now, my own Ellen*, said he, *now —*"

Ellen, though silent, certainly understood, and, understanding, did not disapprove the expressive *now*.

Mr. Meredith shewed a will just executed by Morgan, making Horatio heir to all his fortune; he lamented, he added, it was not in his power to leave you the Morgan estate, but we shall rejoice him when we present to him his father-in-law's legitimate heir.

As Morgan was now to be grandfather to a Viscount, it was proper every body should be sorry for his accident, and anxious about his recovery, which was at present very doubtful.

"As Cot shall save me," cried Winifred, entering to her Lady, who, it was not possible for her to suppose was angry, as she had herself already quite forgot both that and the cause,

cause, "I believe all the world is con mad, and to be sure every poty repofes on poor me, Cot help me; if I had a man to ftand py me and manage my bifnefs, and, Cot knows that is pad enough, for men are fatan's walking fticks, Mr. Jofeph for that, civing my cifts to a pad young woman."

"What's the matter now, Mrs. Winifred?" asked Caroline.

"Why, the matter, Mifs," answered Winifred, "is pad enough, Cot knows, for here hat I lent my new plack spotted fcarf, cut out by Mademoifelle, to Mrs. Gibfon, Lady Margaret's woman; and here's the owld deceitful cheating Lady Margaret, as owes me two fhillings and eight-pence, as fhe ftopped for postage of my aunt Griffiths's letters, is con away with that poor fhabby Doctor, as never cived a farvant a fever at his wedding, who—but they are cone to Scotland, and taken Mrs. Gibfon and my new fcarf with them."

"I am very glad they are gone," said Ellen.

Lady Mappleton thought it was as well.

Mrs. Gordon was glad too they were away, but she wondered they would go to Scotland! for she was perfectly sure, such people would not be noticed there.

"Hoot," Gordon was sure their money would make them noticed any where.

"Yes," and Winifred dared to say Mrs. Gibson would shew away in her black spotted scarf.

Lord Claverton looked at his watch, he observed it had been a long happy morning.

"Yes," replied Lady Mappleton, "and we will make it a long day, you must all dine with me, and to-morrow —"

Evelyn

Evelyn looked tenderly at Ellen: "To-morrow, what shall *we* do to-morrow?"

"You shall make it as happy as to-day," replied Lord Claverton, "happier," politely bowing to the ladies, "it cannot be," and taking his son's arm, "Come, my *son*," emphatically, "you must order your things *home* to dress," and his Lordship, who was an elegant figure himself, *looked* like the elder brother, but *felt* like the father of the *more* elegant Evelyn.

We will not pay our readers judgment or their sentiment so ill a compliment as to suppose we need say, what congratulations passed in a family so endeared to each other as the Merediths: Or that Ellen took care to make Lady Gertrude a sharer in her happiness, as far as regarded the recovery of her fortune; more would at that period have been indelicate. Neither can we enter into a particular account of Evelyn's passionate entreaties to Ellen, to blest him with her hand, nor her

evasions and delays, because no such thing happened on either side; they mutually agreed, that while Ellen wore her first mourning and Morgan's life was in danger, a marriage festival would be improper, but as soon as these impediments were removed, the news papers announced the marriage of the Honorable and Reverend Horatio Claverton, son and heir to Lord Viscount Claverton, and to the immense fortune of the late Walter, and present John Morgan, Esqrs. to the beautiful Countess Dowager of Castle Howel; and that, after the ceremony, the young couple set out, with a grand retinue, on a visit to Lady Gertrude Howel, at Natly Abbey. — Lord Squandervelt, enraged at the triumph of Lord Claverton and the Curate of Little Manor, and resolved to avoid the good things his witty friends would sport on the occasion, led Caroline Holt to the altar, on the same day, and set out also with a grand retinue for Dash Castle; where he lived with the amiable Marchioness, on the happy terms men of his high notions generally do

do live with their wives; that is to say, he was the obsequious admirer of every other woman, was the life of every company abroad, died with ennui at home, kept a mistress, and despised the Marchioness.

In the mean time, the Howels of Moor Bank no sooner heard Lady Castle Howel was independent, and able to support her son's right, than they dropped the law suit.

Little Jane lives with Lady Gertrude, where Captain Meredith is also resident; and the young Lord is left in his native air, on which, as her pride and hope was wrapped up in him, Lady Gertrude laid the utmost stress, to induce his mother to let him remain with her, at least for some time, which the Countess consented to, on condition, that Gordon became residentiary governor and Doctor: Sir James Sibley and his bride came to England to receive her fortune and visit her relations; to whom, as no part of them wanted Lady Frances's assistance, he was very obsequious.

The Meredith's stayed at the Rectory 'till Code Gwyn had undergone a complete repair, when Horatio and Ellen attended the house-warming, and the whole parish, rich as well as poor, commemorated the return of Sir Arthur, and his family to the place of their nativity.

Miss Catherine and Mr. Meredith are still spinster and bachelor, and live with their aged parent; Miss Agnes married a banker of Chester, and Miss Mary gave her hand to Mr. Serjeant Pennings, who, happening to see her at an assize ball with his client, and thinking the Claverton interest worth cultivating, fell in love.

The Lieutenant is a post Captain, but neither is or ever will be a rich man, except in a match, which is likely to take place, he should adopt the policy of Sir James Sibley, in the management of his fortune, which, as well as Lady Frances's, will center in little Jane.

Mrs. Griffiths is deaf and lame, but still housekeeper, as her brother, with almost total deprivation of sight, is butler at Code Gwyn: David has an annuity for his past and present care of the little garden.

Mrs. Dean Holt, after being married fifteen years without children, has lately blessed her good spouse with a son and heir; and as Dr. Ferguson was the accoucher, he no longer talks of the adventure at Little Manor.

Winifred Griffiths on finding Mr. Evelyn would be a Lord, felt her old friendship for him revive to that ardent degree, that she actually, as *she said*, refused a very good settlement from Lord Claverton, with Mr. Joseph, merely because he had prevented her giving her mistress Mr. Evelyn's locket, tho' the truth was, that Winifred could never reconcile the giving the said locket to the poor young woman; and as Joseph, notwithstanding his Lord had no further employment
for

for his talents in intrigue, was so used to attend him, and pay court even to his aches and pains, well knew, if he continued in his place 'till my Lord died, he should have an annuity, besides the usual perquisites to a valet, on the death of a rich and great man, he was at no uncommon pains to remove her jealousy; they, however, still continue to flirt and quarrel by turns, and when each are rich enough to ape their betters, may at last possibly agree to wrangle out the evening of their lives together.

Philip preferred continuing gentleman out of livery to the Countess, to a good place in the customs, offered by Lord Claverton.

In short, as in duty bound, the author leaves all parties who have been friends to her favorites, rich, happy and respectable.

Lady Margaret and her caro sposa she has banished *to*, and not *from* Scotland, where the Doctor unfortunately for himself, hap-
pening

pening to speak rather free, though true, of the great man we have before mentioned as the rushlight of the next age; the said great man, in the depth of his wisdom, discovered the Doctor had carried a ring fence he was making round a new purchased estate, full the fortieth part of an inch beyond his absolute right; which encroachment, as the great man could not in his zeal for justice pass it over, being carried into a court of law, where the accuser was judge, or, what is better, *made judges*, it became more than adequate for all the sins even Lady Margaret could commit.

To the courts of law then we leave the Doctor and her Ladyship, where all strict justice would perhaps impel us to carry John Morgan, Esq. and his one arm; but, with respect both to him and Lord Claverton, the author violates all rule of novel writing, for the Viscount, though in very ill health is still alive; and Morgan, returned to the corner of his own mansion, intent only on repairing the injury he did a grandson, who is the pride of his age, by
the

the only means, that, according to the tenets of the creed in which he had lived, and in which he will probably die, all injuries are to be repaired, namely money; and is at this time denying himself the common necessaries of life, in order to make his rich heir still richer.

Horatio and Ellen are ornaments of the age, so sensible, affluent, liberal, and handsome; the polite world is astonished it could neglect the one or defame the other: Ellen's parties are as brilliant and as numerous, though not exactly in the former set; her taste, her dress, as much the rage as ever: Mrs. Morley and her sort, think their time and attention vastly well bestowed, if, after watching her eyes half an hour at any public place, they obtain a nod or a courtesy—she speaks not but to be approved, nor is seen but to be admired; her virtue is the theme of conversation, and as to faults, it is impossible a woman so rich and beautiful should have any.

Horatio

Horatio perseveres in the sacred function to which he was educated, he already wears lawn sleeves, and preaches before the strangest character ever heard of, A good wife, a tender mother, a sincere friend, a queen, and a christian!! indeed it is astonishing with what rapidity Horatio Claverton, who wants nothing, attains every thing.

Sensible men admire, dissipated ones respect, and those of his diocese and all his particular friends love him.

The few readers who have had patience to accompany the author thus far, will be apt to exclaim, "Aye! those are the monsters we meet at the end of all LANE's collections, men without error! and women without faults!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The truth is, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, the Honorable and Right Reverend Bishop Claverton and the Countess of Castle Howel, are quite as
subject